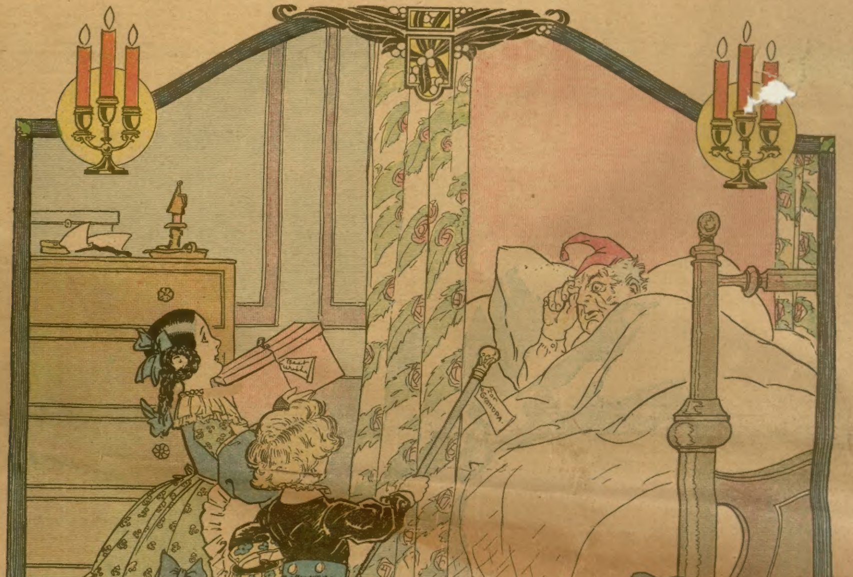
A Merry Christmas to Everybody

CHICAGO LEDGER

VOL. XLIV. NO. 52. CHICAGO, ILL., SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1916. SINGLE COPIES 5 CENTS


Best Wishes
For Grandpa
Christmas Fairies

THE RIVER RAT

-:- Or, -:-

The Perry Plates

By Wilder Anthony

CHAPTER I.

DETECTIVE MURRAY crouched against the wall in the arch of the doorway and peered at the garish lights of the saloon directly opposite. It was dark, "black as the inside of a vault," Murray mentally told himself, and a fine drizzle of rain was sifting down into the canyon of the street; but the detective was not sorry for this. He knew, tho he could not see them, that lynx eyes were watching every approach to Connelly's back rooms, and the inky blackness might have been made to his order. For many weeks he had been on the trail of Dan Shannon, known country wide as the River Rat, the most daring swindler and the shrewdest crook Tom Murray had crossed wits with in a dozen years, and now that the net was closing in the detective [illegible] very thankful for all the help he [illegible] get. He knew that somewhere along the river wall in the rear of the saloon his partner, Max Conrad, was hiding and watching the back door; and he chuckled grimly under his breath as he thought over the coup they meant to pull off before daylight.

Murray suddenly shifted his gaze from the saloon front to a point some yards to the right, where a sharp corner joined the narrow street to the wider thorofare beyond. Above the dripping of the rain and the lapping of the river against the granite wall his trained ears had caught the soft patter of rubber-shod feet on the wet asphalt, and he was interested in everybody who passed that way just then. Emerging from the darkness like a spirit of the night, a cloaked and hooded figure slipped hurriedly across the lighted area in front of Connelly's and paused for an instant on the step of a doorway which led to the rooms above.

The detective almost stopped breathing, while he hugged the wall and watched with eyes alive with interest. Even the foggy mist thru which he gazed could not prevent his instant recognition of that quick-moving figure. He had seen that birdlike poise of head and shoulders too often to be mistaken now, and he felt mighty glad of his shelter as the girl swept the street with one long, penetrating glance before she went inside. It was Anna Kalena, the Polish sweetheart and co-worker of the Rat, and Detective Murray drew a breath of relief when she disappeared without seeming to note his presence. He knew that, with the possible exception of Shannon himself, the girl was by long odds the shrewdest member of the gang.

Twice the detective glimpsed the shadowy outlines of some slinking prowler of the night as he slid around the edge of the lighted area. Several times the swinging doors of the saloon parted for the entrance or exit of some frequenter of the place, and more than once the watcher recognized faces which were too well known to the police of many cities; but he kept as still and motionless as a cat at a mouse hole. He had big game in view just now; there was no time to bother with petty crooks. It was nearly one o'clock when a shadowy figure appeared in the mouth of the alley near the saloon and darted across the street to the doorway.

"Well?" Murray demanded, in a hoarse whisper, as the figure—an undersized boy so far as he could tell in the darkness—came to a halt at his side. "Out with it! What d'ya want, eh?"

"I gotta letter for yer, boss," the boy replied, producing a folded bit of paper from beneath his sweater. "He told me I'd find yer here."

Murray seized the paper eagerly. Tho no names had been mentioned, he knew that the boy must be a messenger from Conrad, for no other person knew where to find him at that moment. Opening his heavy jacket, he held the paper under it and threw a stream of light over it from his pocket lamp. A few words in his partner's handwriting sprang into view.

"Come quick, Tom!" he read. "I've got 'em both backed up in a corner and I need you. Come thru the back door to the room on the second floor. The kid will show you. MAX."

After a single glance had given him the gist of the message, Murray thrust the flashlight back into his pocket and turned to the boy. He easily guessed what had happened. Conrad had been forced to take matters into his own hands and get the drop on Shannon and the girl; now he was calling for help to take them to headquarters. It was all as simple as A, B, C, and Murray chuckled to himself as he felt for his revolver and ordered the boy to show him the way.

The two ran swiftly across the street and into the deeper blackness of the alley, where they were obliged to proceed more slowly. Even so, it was less than five minutes from the time he received the note when Detective Murray crept cautiously into a black doorway and started to climb a flight of narrow stairs which led upward into the dark and almost airless regions above the saloon. The boy had remained below to guard the rear and give warning of any one's approach, for this was a desperate neighborhood, and the detective knew that the Rat had many friends. At the top of the stairs he paused for a bit and reached for his flashlight. It was dark and silent as a tomb there in the hall and, altho the boy's directions had been clear and he felt fairly sure of his ground, he decided that it would do no harm to have a look at things before he went farther.

He had the flashlight out and was pressing its button when a slight sound to one side of him caused him to half turn and raise the revolver in his right hand, while his left leveled the light; but he was just too late. Even as the shaft of white light cut a thin slice out of the darkness and he glimpsed the shadowy outline of a man's figure, something fell with a blinding crash on the side of his head. A myriad of bright sparks danced in his eyes, his knees buckled under him, and he went down on the uneven floor of the hall.

When at last he awoke, Murray lay for some minutes idly wondering where he was and what had happened. Finally as consciousness fully returned and a partial understanding of recent events filtered thru his mind, he raised himself abruptly, and was half upright, when he fell back with a low groan as tho smitten by an unseen hand. In the effort to raise his hands to his splitting head, he found to his surprise that they were fastened in front of him; then he lay still and waited for his vision to clear.

When the dizziness and pain had subsided sufficiently to permit an examination of his surroundings, he found that he was in a dimly lighted room, small and almost square, with a bare, dirty floor and stained walls. At one end was a closed door thru which came a low murmur of voices, while a table, bearing the remains of a meal, and a dilapidated chest of drawers comprised the furnishings. Some six or eight feet away beneath a heavily shuttered window a big man sat on the floor, his shoulders propped against the wall and his manacled hands stretched out in front of him. Murray stared at him in consternation.

"Max!" he breathed. "What in Heaven's name are you doing there, man? I thought you had the Rat cornered for keeps. What——"

Max Conrad shook his head and glanced warningly toward the door. "Not so loud, Tom," he whispered. "They're in there, the whole d—d crowd of 'em, and they've sure put one across on us. It was a sell all around. They sent notes to both of us and then slugged us out there in the hall. We're even locked inside our own handcuffs. I got mine first, and I was awake again in time to see the girl forge that note to you and do herself up like a boy so she could deliver it. It was a pretty scheme all right. God only knows what they'll do with us now. The Rat and Anna and Dutch John are in there." He broke off with another expressive look in the direction of the closed door.

Murray ground his teeth in helpless rage and disgust. Clever as always, Shannon had learned of their spying and turned the tables in his own diabolically cunning way. For the tenth time in half as many weeks the Rat had called out "Checkmate!" just when the detectives were beginning to think they had him cornered. And this time he had done better than ever before—he had them both absolutely helpless and entirely at his mercy. Murray was just opening his mouth to speak, when the door swung back and a man stepped into the room.

He was a tall man and thin, incredibly thin, with high cheekbones and a hooked nose set between eyes as small and keen as gimlets. He was well dressed in a slightly flashy way, and on the whole he was not bad looking, altho a student of physiognomy might have noticed a certain shiftiness of eye and narrowness of forehead which is not commonly supposed to go with honesty. He was smoking a slender, black cigar, and for a few minutes he grinned in complacent silence at the two detectives; then he addressed Murray.

"Feeling better?" he inquired, in a rasping voice. "I'm glad you've come around. John had to hit you pretty hard—we couldn't afford to take chances, you know; but I hope you won't hold that up against him. We took you in rather neatly, didn't we?" He chuckled sibilantly.

Murray scowled and said nothing. In the presence of this man whom he had hunted for so long he could think of nothing except the predicament he and his partner were in. He should have known better, he bitterly told himself. He might have recognized Anna in her role of messenger boy, or guessed that the note was a forgery. Instead he had jumped at the bait like a hungry trout and now he was in the power of one of the most cold-blooded criminals in the world. Even his splitting head was forgotten in his curiosity as to what the Rat intended to do.

Shannon seemed in no particular hurry to do anything. He knew that he had plenty of time, and he seemed rather to enjoy the situation just as it was. Seating himself on a corner of the table, he smoked luxuriously and grinned at his victims, while they glared defiantly back into his cold eyes.

"You're pretty smart, you fellows," Shannon observed, at length, in a matter-of-fact way, "pretty smart and nervy; but you're in wrong. Things have reached a point where the world is getting too small to hold the lot of us. You boys are beginning to inconvenience me; and I've found it necessary to devote time to you which might have been better spent elsewhere. I'm not really anxious to hurt you even yet, but you've got to do one of two things: You've got to pursue a 'hands off' policy so far as I am concerned from now on, or——" He paused and suggestively hunched one thin shoulder in the direction of the river.

"So that's your game, is it?" Murray grunted, with a short, sneering laugh. "I thought it was odd, you knocking us on the head and going to all this trouble when you might have laid us out cold there in the hall. You'd better turn us loose and pack your trunk for a stay in the storage house, Dan. It'll save time. I can see you're losing your grip when you talk that way to me and Max. What do you take us for, anyhow? A pair of boobs?"

The Rat eyed his cigar reflectively for a little while before he replied. "Not exactly," he finally admitted, "altho from the way you walked into our little trap I might be justified in doing so. In fact, I'm paying you a certain compliment if you could only see it that way. It's some few years now since I started to work against the great bulk of humanity, and barring you two men I don't know of any bull who ever caused me to think much about the hoose-gow. I'm a reasonable man, boys, even when I've got the best of it, and I'm making you a proposition. If you do what's right by me you'll clean up ten thousand apiece before the year is out. By that time I might even fix things so you could get hold of the Perry plates."

At mention of the famous plates from which the Rat and his confederates must already have coined a fortune, and which were so nearly perfect that the notes printed from them had often slipped by the Treasury experts themselves, the two detectives exchanged meaning glances; then Murray grunted scornfully.

"What's the use, Dan?" he asked. "You know Max and I ain't grafters. We've been with the law too long to turn against it now. We're out to get you, that's the flat truth. This house is surrounded right now and if you're wise you'll turn us loose and get ready to come along quietly. No use making a bad matter worse, you know."

Shannon laughed softly as he stepped away from the table.

"You're a poor bluffer, Murray," he said. "Just to show you that I'm serious I'll explain what will happen if you are stubborn."

He moved across the room to a chest of drawers and opened one of them, from which he took a coil of rubber hose and a cup-shaped contrivance similar to those used by dentists to administer gas. Used as they were to shocks and surprises of every kind, the two detectives paled slightly when they saw them.

"You see," Shannon explained, smiling, "it's a neat and simple method of getting rid of one's enemies. By fixing one end of this tubing over the gas burner yonder and tying the mask over a man's nose and mouth, he may be put out of the way in a quiet and practically painless manner. Afterward there is the river and the harbor. Simple, isn't it?"

"You devil, you!" Murray strove to speak calmly, altho the sweat was running down his face and neck in streams. "You're bluffing and you know it. You daren't do——"

"Just try me and see," the Rat interrupted tauntingly, as he returned the mask and hose to the drawer. "I'm a desperate man, Murray, and I won't balk at a life or two, altho I'd rather settle things peaceably. The tide will turn in about two hours. I'll give you that long to make up your minds. So long!" He walked out of the room and closed the door after him without saying another word.

"God!" The exclamation—it was not an oath—burst from Max Conrad's lips the minute they were alone. "What'll we do, Tom? He means what he says, I'd swear to it."

"He does," Murray agreed, "but we've got two hours, Max. Hold your nerve, man. We've never thrown in with any crook yet, and we'll not begin now. Better chance the gas and the river first. Curse these bracelets! If I could get my hands loose, I'd soon be out of this."

"They've got the keys in the other room," Conrad muttered, trying vainly to pull one of his big hands thru the steel ring. "I saw him take 'em there before you woke up. They've sure got us dead to rights this trip."

Murray said nothing. He was busy thinking, trying with all his wits to plan some way of escape during the short time which remained to them before Shannon would return for his answer. He knew the Rat too well to expect any mercy; but he was a brave man and he had been in tight places more than once. He was considering the feasibility of hitching his way over to Conrad and helping him to break the window and shout for help, when the door opened again.

This time, however, in place of Shannon himself, it was Anna who entered. In her hand she held a small leather bag which she put down on the floor in front of the chest. Without paying the least attention to the detectives she proceeded to pull open the drawers and transfer a number of small articles from them into the bag. The two men watched her in silence. Both were interested in her for various professional reasons, and both saw in her at this moment the one hope they had of ever leaving that room alive. Tho she was undeniably a partner in all of Shannon's crooked work—some even went so far as to maintain that Anna was the real brains of the organization—it was a known fact that the girl always stopped short of murder. In any and all swindling operations she was as daring as any man, and as a forger she was without a peer, but for some reason best known to herself this daughter of a Polish Jew drew the line at capital crime.

In person she was small and slender, but with a well-rounded figure which looked exceedingly well in the soft gray dress she was now wearing. Her hands were small and well cared for, and she wore a tiny shoe below an ankle that would have gained her a place in any chorus even without the pronounced ability as an actress she had shown on more than one occasion. Her hair was jet black and curly, almost as short as a boy's, and in startling contrast with the dead white of her face. Since casting aside the boy's clothing in which she had dressed in order to lure Murray into the hands of her friends, she had neglected to remove the boy's cap, which fitted snugly on her small head.

When she had finished her packing and locked the bag, she took a small sack of tobacco and a book of papers from her stocking, rolled and lighted a cigarette, and came across the room. Perching herself on the table edge, she

BE SURE and read "THE RIVER RAT; or, THE PERRY PLATES," the new detective story in this issue. It is a hummer. Read the new juvenile story in this issue, "THE BOY SKIPPER; or, THE SKYLARK'S CRUISE." It is a spanking fine story. Look out for a great leading story next week, "THE CORAL EMBLEM; or, THE KIDNAPED ACTRESS." It will keep you on tiptoe. Some of the best stories in all the history of the Ledger will appear in these papers during the next few months. If you want to make some one a present, why not give him or her a year's subscription to the LEDGER? They would get lots of entertainment and fun out of it. Try it once.

smoked lazily and regarded the detectives with curiously quizzical eyes.

"Going away, Anna?" Murray asked, after she had eyed them silently for several minutes.

"Yes," she nodded dispassionately, "this place is no good for us now that you bulls are wise to it. The men are already moving the heavier things. By this time tomorrow we'll all be a long ways off."

Something in the expression of her eyes as she spoke the last words and the faintest of accents on "all" made the detective prick up his ears.

"You know, then, what Dan intends to do with us?" he hazarded, after a little pause.

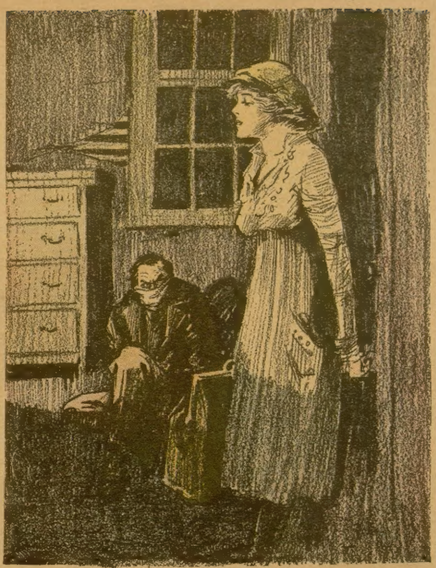
"Of course. Why shouldn't I?" She watched a smoke ring float slowly toward the stained ceiling. "Didn't I bring you two boobs up here so they could get you? You fly-cops are all alike—think you're twice as smart as the poor devils you're hunting. For two bits I'd walk into police headquarters at noon tomorrow and steal the inkstand off the captain's desk. I'd get away with it, too, believe me!"

"Maybe you would," Murray vouchsafed dryly; "you're clever enough, Anna, But I always thought you personally drew the line at 'croaking' a guy. If we'd caught you tonight, as planned, that belief of mine might have helped you in court."

"And what if it had?" Anna suddenly leaned forward and her lazy eyes sparkled with anger. "What if it had, Mr. Fly-cop? Do you think for a minute that I'd take any favors from you and your tribe? Rather than see you so much as lay one finger on Dan Shannon I'd kill you myself with my own hands. But I should worry! There ain't brains enough in your whole d—n police force to catch us. But there"—her anger was gone as suddenly as it came, and she got down off the table—"I didn't come here to get mad at you. You'll get yours presently."

She crossed the room and stooped to pick up the bag; then paused and turned as tho she had just thought of something.

"Remember one thing," she said earnestly, "don't lose your nerve. Some day you may find out that Dan Shannon ain't as bad as you'd like to paint him; but whatever happens, even at the very last, don't lose your nerve! Remember that!"



"Don't lose your nerve!"

Before the prisoners could make any sort of response, she had slipped thru the door and vanished, leaving them to construe what meaning they could into her words.

For a little they talked in low tones, encouraging each other as brave men will on the verge of a crisis, but finally they fell silent and waited for the Rat to appear. He came, after a time, followed by Dutch John, a brutal, vicious-looking thug, who grinned at his helpless victims in unholy anticipation of what would soon take place.

"Well, boys," Shannon began pleasantly, "I hope you've made up your minds. Time is getting short. What is it, yes or no?"

"No," Murray answered, while Max Conrad echoed the word. "We'd rather die clean than live dirty, Dan, and if you croak us we'll be satisfied in knowing that you'll swing for it. Go ahead if you insist and do your worst."

For a long minute the Rat's beady eyes traveled over his victims in a slow, wondering stare; then he spoke a few words to his companion and opened the drawer which contained the gas apparatus. This time he brought forth two masks, and Murray heaved a sigh of relief. He would have hated to watch Conrad die before him. Since the only light in the room came from the gas-jet to which the hose had to be attached the two men were obliged to work in darkness. Murray did not struggle much when the deadly cone was strapped over his face. He knew it would be useless, and he was still hoping against hope that Anna had not deserted them, altho things had already gone so far that he could not see what she could do even tho she tried.

There was an interval of perhaps five minutes after the apparatus was adjusted before the sound of steps on the floor told Murray that Shannon was moving toward the gas-jet. Then came a stream of the nauseating, suffocating gas full in his face. At first he tried to draw back and away from it, while he held his breath; but this was impossible, and with his head already swimming from the effects of the fumes he was giving himself up for lost, when a puff of cool, sweet air struck his nostrils. For a few seconds, scarcely believing his senses, he was almost afraid to breathe, but the air kept coming and he was soon drinking in great gulps of it. Then, as tho from a great distance, he heard a door close.

Almost instantly a voice began to speak in his ear. At first he could not make out where it came from or who was talking, but it finally dawned on him that the voice was Anna's and that it came thru the hose which should have been spouting gas.

"I'm in the cellar," the girl told him. "The men have gone. I cut the gas off and opened up the pipe so I could talk thru it and you could breathe. You see, we don't do murder after all, Mr. Fly-cop. You just lay there and wait for your friends to come—I've told 'em where to find you."

The voice ceased and Detective Murray lay still, thinking many thoughts, until the smashing of doors and the sound of many feet on the stairs told him that help had come. Soon afterward they found him and set him on his feet along with Max Conrad, neither of them much the worse for the awful experience. Of Dan Shannon, Dutch John, or the girl, Anna, there was no trace.

The conclusion of this thrilling detective story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. Read it. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year.

THE SMUGGLER

-:- Or, -:-

We Three Girls

By Ella Middleton Tybout

[Copyright by J. B. Lippincott Co.]

Begun in No. 47, November 18. Subscriptions can begin with that issue or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER XI.

I DON'T like suppers on the rocks, do you?"

"No, I think they're beastly."

It was the next afternoon, and Gabrielle and I were sitting on the veranda. I was pretending to read, while she was frankly doing nothing.

The day had dragged heavily. My confidence in Mary Anne's brother had been misplaced, for he had not appeared in triumph with the ring and we felt rather aggrieved in consequence.

Of course we had all visited the rocks many times, separately and collectively, but had returned empty-handed and rather cross. Even the Canadian sun is hot at midday in summer, and continued ineffectual stooping among rocks and loose stones would have its effect upon the most angelic disposition. Then, too, Gordon Bennett had not appeared with his diver, nor had we heard further from Lord Wilfrid on the subject, so our faith in mankind had suffered accordingly. I also wished something pleasant would happen and agreed with Gabrielle that the afternoon was endless.

A diversion was here created by the appearance of Mr. Graham, who carried a bunch of long-stemmed white roses that certainly were never the product of the island. Mrs. Graham had sent them with her love and apologies for her hysterical outburst of the night before, which, he was careful to explain, was solely the result of her physical condition. He hoped we had not allowed their departure to break up the party.

We told him about the lost ring and he listened with interest. I thought his expressions of regret and offers of assistance were unnecessarily effusive, but then, as Gabrielle said afterward, Mr. Graham always went a little too far in everything.

After a while he took his departure, saying he did not like to leave Mrs. Graham long alone in her present nervous condition. Gabrielle lifted the roses and laid their heavy perfumed heads against her face.

"They are beautiful," she said, "but what shall we do with them?"

"Do with them?" I echoed.

"Yes, that's what I said. You know if Elizabeth even gets one sniff she'll have hay fever, and I'm sure I don't want to add that to her afflictions, poor dear."

After a little consideration we decided to transfer the roses to Lady Edith, and Gabrielle volunteered to take them to her at once.

"For they must not go into the house," she said, "and if we keep them out here any longer some enterprising germ might drift thru the window and up Elizabeth's nose. Will you go with me?"

I declined, saying I was going back to the rocks to have one more look before dark.

We strolled along together to the point where our paths diverged, and Gabrielle became silent and preoccupied.

"Elise," she said, speaking very solemnly, "I am going to ask you a question and I want a truthful answer, absolutely your honest opinion, you know."

"Well?"

"Do you think I care more for Elizabeth than she does for me? Or does Elizabeth care more for me than I do for her?"

I laughed, and she continued half laughing also, yet wholly in earnest.

"Well, I really want to know."

"What do you think yourself?"

The question had often been propounded to me, and I knew that a definite answer would be merely ground for argument.

"I think you are horrid. But then," she paused reflectively, "perhaps you'd better not answer after all. I would hate to think Elizabeth did not care as much for me as I do for her, yet it doesn't seem to me she can. You may laugh, but of course you don't understand how we feel about it."

Our paths separated here. Gabrielle, with her arms full of roses, went on to the village, while I picked my way carefully along the shore to the rocks.

It was useless to look again, as I well knew, yet I searched conscientiously for some time, then sat down to rest beside the ashes of our last night's fire. I really do not know of anything more depressing than ashes when one is rather tired and inclined to be introspective. They seem to typify so remorselessly the inevitable outcome of human desires and ambitions.

So I sat watching the glow of the sunset, and thinking of many things in a disconnected sort of way. I thought of Gabrielle and Elizabeth, and of their friendship which seemed so wonderfully satisfying; I also remembered the shadows of the previous night and my unnecessary agitation over them. Then I recalled Gabrielle's parting words with something akin to a sigh. Perhaps, as she said, I did not understand, but I thought I did and envied them heartily.

I confess to being foolishly blue as I sat on the rocks listening to the wash of the waves, for I was sure no one was speculating whether they loved me more than I did them, and I felt very lonely in consequence. The tide was low and the ocean calm and uninteresting, so I turned my back to it, preferring to watch the sun reluctantly surrender the world to the moon, which would soon come up out of the water just as it had done last night.

Therefore I did not see two figures walking along the shore and not until I heard my name in Mr. Blake's even voice was I aware that I was no longer alone, but that he and Gordon Bennett were standing beside me, both looking rather amused.

"A penny for your thoughts," said Mr. Blake, producing it.

"Nonsense," interrupted Mr. Bennett; "they are worth more than that. What will you take for them?"

"They are not even worth a penny. I really don't believe I was thinking of anything."

"Has the ring been found?"

I replied that it had not, and that we feared it must be in the ocean, after all. Here I paused significantly, for I did not like to ask outright what had become of the promised diver, yet considered a hint permissible under the circumstances.

I thought he looked ill at ease as he somewhat formally expressed his regret for the accident. His manner was certainly very different from yesterday and I decided that the incident had begun to bore him. Mr. Blake wandered down to the water's edge, but Mr. Bennett seated himself beside me.

"The world is out of joint," he remarked; "what's the matter?"

"I'm cross," I admitted, "and awfully blue. Please don't ask me why, for I don't know myself."

He was wise enough not to pursue the subject, but began to talk upon impersonal matters, and after a while I became quite cheerful and even wondered secretly what I had found to be melancholy about, for it was certainly a very nice world after all.

It was a very beautiful world, too, [illegible] the sun sank slowly out of sight, leaving the heavens tinted with scarlet and gold, fading here and there to amber and palest pink, and we instinctively grew silent as we watched it.

Finally Mr. Bennett touched me on the shoulder.

"Look," he said.

I turned in the direction he indicated and saw a little skiff under full sail, heading for the open sea. The white canvas gleamed rosily pink in the sunset glow, and we could see the figure of a man silhouetted against the sky. A fresh breeze had sprung up, and the boat cut thru the waves, now careening to one side until the sails seemed to dip in the water, now righting itself and darting forward as tho exulting in its dangerous freedom. Steadily onward it went, and as I watched it Mr. Graham's song returned to me. Almost unconsciously I repeated a few lines:

"Where the far-away dim horizon
Touches the mist-bound sea,
There lieth an Unknown Kingdom
With its gates ajar for me."

"Yes," said Gordon Bennett, adding after a moment, "it is Graham, you know."

I contradicted him at once, secure in my superior knowledge.

"Oh, no! Mr. Graham is at home. I saw him this afternoon and he said Mrs. Graham was far from well. He is with her, of course."

I rose as I spoke, for it was time to go home, and Mr. Bennett rose also. He looked at me in a puzzled, incredulous sort of way and once or twice seemed about to speak, but thought better of it. As we walked toward Mr. Blake I remembered the shadows and my fright of the previous night. I began to tell him about it, but a gleam of gold caught my eye and I saw he was wearing the scarf-pin with the Sphinx's head. For some reason the sight of this pin checked the words on my lips and a feeling of distrust arose in my heart, totally unjustifiable.

Mr. Blake joined us and we walked slowly home in silence, interrupted only by occasional perfunctory remarks. I was conscious of a return of my former depression, also of an inclination to be very disagreeable indeed should any one give me the slightest provocation.

Perhaps my companions realized this, for at the turn of the path they said good-by and went on to the village, leaving me to return to the cottage alone. Far in the distance I saw a woman's figure I thought might be Gabrielle coming home along the shore, and I decided to wait for her.

So I went around to our little slip, intending to sit upon the ledge until she arrived. Much to my surprise, I found it already occupied, for Mrs. Graham sat, or rather crouched, upon the ledge muffled in a thick shawl. Her thin hands were clasped so tightly together that the veins stood out like cords and the knuckles were blue and prominent. Altho it was evident from her absorption that she had not heard me approach, she displayed no surprise when I sat down beside her, and when I spoke she answered as tho I had been there all the time.

The sun had quite set now and the sky was gray and leaden. The wind blew sharply from the east, bringing with it a penetrating chill which made me shiver in spite of myself.

"Had you not better go home?" I suggested. "Surely it is not wise for you to sit here."

In reply she raised her hand and pointed toward the ocean.

"He is out there."

"Mr. Graham?"

"Yes."

Gordon Bennett had been right, and this was the way Mr. Graham looked after his invalid wife. I tried not to show the indignation I felt as I thanked her for the roses, and again suggested she would be better at home.

"Roses?" she repeated. "Oh, yes. It was Harry's idea; he is always so thoughtful. I hope you liked them."

"I do not consider it very thoughtful to leave you like this."

The words sprang to my lips and I regretted them as soon as they were uttered.

"I told him to go." She was at once on the defensive. "He would have stayed with me if I had asked him. I wanted him to go. But, oh——"

She collapsed again and shivered convulsively.

"The skiff is so little and the ocean is so big."

"He goes so often I should think you would be accustomed to it."

I fear my voice was not very sympathetic, but, as Gabrielle said, there were times when Mrs. Graham jarred one's nervous system. She was looking straight at me now with an expression of terror in her large dark eyes.

"Often," she whispered; "often? Ah, you don't know! Day or night when the fancy takes possession of him he has to go; he says he cannot help it. Last night—and tonight."

"Last night!" I ejaculated. "You don't mean to say he left you last night?"

She immediately stiffened, resenting the implied criticism.

"There was no reason he should not. I was all right as soon as I got to bed. He was restless and wakeful, and I did not need attention. It was best he should go. I was quite comfortable at home."

Quite comfortable! I could imagine the thin white face upon the pillow, with frightened eyes staring into the darkness hour after hour thruout the long night, and it was not my idea of comfort. I uttered an impulsive ejaculation of sympathy, but she checked me with some dignity and remarked that she thought she would take my advice and go home.

"I shall be all the better for a cup of tea," she said. "Isn't it curious how depressed one gets when one is cold and tired."

I watched her frail figure walk languidly in the direction of her house, and knew that the tea, even if she drank it, would bring her no comfort. Several times she stopped and looked behind her, and once she shaded her eyes with her hand and looked out over the expanse of water toward the far horizon. I knew she was looking for the little skiff I had seen bounding so joyously over the waves, and when she resumed her walk, her thin shoulders drooping and her head bent upon her breast, I felt the contempt for Harry Graham which something in his personality prevented me from feeling when he was actually present.

I was very glad when Gabrielle joined me and my thoughts could be diverted into another channel. I saw at once that her afternoon had not been a success, and she was anxious to tell me about it.

"Well," she began, slipping her hand thru my arm, "I've had the funniest experience. I'm glad my brother is not recovering from an illness that left him with a crook in his temper."

It seemed she had gone to Lady Edith's sitting-room at the hotel (for the Campbells had taken a suite), and finding her alone had presented the roses and had a cozy little chat, as well as a cup of tea, which she found very cheering.

"And then," continued Gabrielle, "just as I was about to come home I heard some one go into Lady Edith's bedroom and slam the door. She got up quickly and then sat down again, and I saw she looked worried. Then I heard a smash of china and somebody swore—yes, and swore hard, too. I didn't know whether to get up or sit still and, of course, I did the wrong thing; I sat still and I ought to have gone out; I knew that later."

"Well, what happened?"

"In a minute the door between the rooms was flung open and Lord Wilfrid marched in, so angry he never saw me. And, oh, Elise, his arms were full of roses."

"Roses!"

"Yes, red roses. Dozens of them. They were more than he could carry and fell on the floor all round him, and whenever he saw one on the carpet he stepped on it."

"What?"

"Yes, he did, and ground it under his heel. He began to say something, too, in a blustering sort of way when Lady Edith interrupted him. She stood in front of him, very tall and straight, and looked directly at him. She said, 'Wilfrid, we are not alone.' Her head was very high in the air, and I never saw her look so lovely; I felt awfully sorry for her, too, for I think her pride must have suffered."

"What happened then?"

"Well, then he saw me—and I certainly wished I was not there to be seen—and muttered something. And then he dumped those glorious roses on the floor and rang the bell. I tried to talk pleasantly while we were waiting for the boy to come, but honestly the whole room seemed full of red roses, I never saw such flowers in my life, and I couldn't think of a thing to say. When the boy came Lord Wilfrid said, 'Take that trash and throw it out,' and he gathered them up and went off.

"Lord Wilfrid went off, too. He said something civil to me about having sailed about in the sun until he had a horrid headache and the scent of the roses was intolerable. But you know he didn't have to smell them, for he could have stayed in his own room. He scowled at his sister as he left the room, and I think she is dreadfully worried about him. She is going to get a doctor from the city, for she doesn't think this air agrees with him."

"I wonder what can be the matter with him," I speculated. "Perhaps he is threatened with brain trouble. She seems to be so careful of him, and the least things excite him."

"I couldn't help wondering where so many exquisite roses came from," said Gabrielle, "for flowers are hard to get here, you know. Lady Edith said her brother had never been able to endure the odor of roses, but I noticed that the white ones we sent did not seem to excite him at all. In fact, I don't think he saw them. What sort of a time did you have?"

I told her about my afternoon as we mounted the steps leading to the cottage, and we agreed that we were very glad our own families were merely commonplace and possessed no highly wrought invalids to be watched and guarded.

The cottage was brightly lighted, and Elizabeth stood in the door to welcome us. A metamorphosed Elizabeth, absolutely radiating happiness and arrayed in her red dress, which she only wears when she feels especially cheerful.

"Where have you been?" she exclaimed. "I thought you would never come home."

She seized our hands and dragged us into the living-room.

"Look!" she cried, her third finger extended.

And there was the marquise ring, its seven rubies shining in the bright light, and its diamonds twinkling ecstatically.

"It was Mary Anne," she said, in answer to our questions. "Isn't she the dearest old thing? To think of her simply rooting around among the rocks until she found it! And she wouldn't take a penny of reward. I think I really hurt her feelings when I tried to insist on it. I never was so glad to get anything in my life, for you know how I valued that ring."

"When did she find it?" I inquired. "I have just come back from the rocks."

But Elizabeth was above mere details.

"It doesn't matter when she found it so long as it is here," she said, "and dinner is ready. I feel hungry enough to eat the tablecloth."

So we went to dinner and were served by Mary Anne, whom we each congratulated in turn, and I insisting upon her describing the very spot where she found the ring.

"Sure, Miss Elise," she said, "it was down on them rocks where I spread yer supper last night. Between two stones it was, and like as not you walked over it time and again. Be thankful now that it's 'ere and don't werrit yerself 'ow I 'appened to pick up them particular stones."

"That's true philosophy," agreed Gabrielle, "and anyhow let's talk about something else. I want to tell Elizabeth about Lord Wilfrid and the roses."

CHAPTER XII.

OF COURSE," said Gordon Bennett, "you know your own affairs best."

"I am glad you have come to such a sensible conclusion," I replied, leaning over the edge of the boat and trailing my hand in the water, altho I knew such an act is always irritating to the one who manipulates the sail.

"And no doubt you think I'm a very fresh sort of a chap."

I preserved an ostentatious silence.

"I am answered," he said, with a vexed laugh; "found guilty on my own indictment. But I hoped you would not agree so unreservedly."

I wiped my hand on my handkerchief, spreading the latter to dry in the sun, and looking out to sea with apparent absorption in the horizon.

"One ear and one side of your face are very red. Is it sunburn or wrath?"

"The sun is hot," I replied, with alacrity. "Perhaps we had better go home. Will you steer for the shore?"

"Not on your life! I've got you out here now, and I intend to keep you. You are powerless, mademoiselle."

I knew I was, and raged inwardly. We had been spending the morning on the water, a not infrequent occurrence of late, and until the introduction of a certain unfortunate topic I had enjoyed myself immensely; for the day was perfection, and my companion thoroly understood the management of his boat, as well as the art of being agreeable.

The conversation had somehow drifted to the robbery at the hotel, and I had thoughtlessly mentioned the safe in our dining-room and Lady Edith's jewels reposing therein for protection. He had protested against our assuming such a responsibility, and urged their immediate return to their owner, which proposition I declined to consider, and the argument waxed hot, ending with an emphatic assertion on his part that we should not be allowed to leave home again without a guardian. This had been the last straw, and I had replied with an asperity which called forth the remark at the beginning of this chapter.

"Look here," he resumed firmly. "I'm not going to back down on one word I have said, but I'm sorry if you are angry about it. I think you don't quite understand my motive."

"Let us talk of something else, Mr. Bennett."

"But listen, Miss Elise. By your own admission, you really know nothing whatever about these people."

"You forget that they are older friends than yourself, after all."

"The General asked me to call; otherwise I should not have ventured to intrude."

His manner was decidedly stiff, and he jerked the tiller resentfully; as we changed our course in swift response, a smothered exclamation escaped against my will, for the boat careened alarmingly.

"Don't be frightened," he said, forgetting his irritation. "I won't upset you."

"I'm not frightened."

"And don't quarrel with me any more. I won't have my morning spoiled by any confounded Englishman."

"It was a woman," I murmured, "not a man."

We both laughed, and by common consent let the matter drop for the time being, for I was quite willing to resume the lazy, delightful camaraderie into which we had drifted, and to banish unpleasant subjects which might interfere with it.

So we talked or were silent as the spirit moved, while the white-capped waves lapped against the boat, and the water danced in the sunlight, with cool green shadows here and there, deep and unfathomable as shadows should be when the ocean lies beneath them.

"Do you know," he said at last, "that I have in my possession something belonging to you?"

"Oh," I said, with what I flattered myself with fine indifference, "I think you must be mistaken. I have not lost anything."

I was bareheaded, for I liked to feel the wind blow thru my hair, and as it curled naturally I was comfortably certain that my personal appearance would not be endangered by so doing. I wished, however, that my hat was firmly pinned upon my head as he leaned forward and looked closely at me, his blue eyes laughing, and a dimple in his cheek very apparent. I always thought dimples so out of place on a man—perhaps because I have none myself and always wanted them.

"Why aren't your side-combs mates?" he inquired.

"Because I like them best this way;" I tried to speak carelessly, but his laugh was so spontaneous and merry that I gave up all effort at pretense and joined in heartily.

"When are you going to give it back to me?" I asked.

"Not yet," he said, suddenly serious. "I must return it in my own way, and—I do not think the time has come, do you?"

But I did not answer, for I felt my face grow suddenly hot, and sometimes one has nothing to say when one most desires to speak.

"We must go home," I said slowly. "The morning has quite gone. Take me in, please."

This time he made no objection, but headed for the shore, and as we approached the little slip he turned with an evident effort and addressed me soberly.

"Miss Elise," he said, "at the risk of offending you again, I must say something more."

"Don't," I entreated; "it's not worth while—don't spoil the morning. You know you said you did not want to do that."

"Give back that box to her—Lady Edith. If you do not, you will certainly regret it. But if you won't, in spite of what I tell you, for Heaven's sake don't mention it to any one as you did to me this morning—to the Grahams, for instance, or any one at all."

"I am not likely to say anything," I returned stiffly. "I very much regret having mentioned it to you. By the way," I continued, "I quite forgot something important. At least it is important to me, because I am curious. Where did you get your scarf-pin?"

"My scarf-pin?"

His hand involuntarily sought his throat, but he was wearing a negligee shirt and soft silk tie.

"Oh, I don't mean today. The Sphinx's head, you know, in dull gold. Where did it come from?"

It was a simple enough question, and one easily answered, but Gordon Bennett flushed deep red beneath his tan and brought the boat up beside the slip in silence.

"Well?"

In retaliation for his persistence in the matter of the jewels, I was determined to press the question, now that I saw he wished to avoid a reply.

"My pin? Oh, yes, I remember. I'm glad you liked it."

"I am not sure I liked it; it interests me."

"Why?"

"Oh, because it did. I would like to know where you got it."

"Well—I found it."

"Where?"

Again a pause, and again the blood mounted to his face.

"Where did you find it? I would really like to know."

"In the streets of New York."

His eyes refused to meet mine, and I knew intuitively that he lied; also that he realized I knew it.

I said no more, but stepped out on the slip with an unpleasant tightening of the muscles of my throat and a curious sensation that everything was slipping away from me.

"Good-by," I said dully, as I reached the steps, and he raised his cap in silence.

At the top I paused and looked back, for I thought I heard my name. He sat bareheaded in the stern of his boat, gazing after me, but made no effort to attract my attention nor to follow me ashore, so I decided I was mistaken and he had not called me. I wished he had. I wanted to go back and ask him to explain, but pride forbade, and I resumed my walk to the house with my head as high in the air as I could get it, hoping to impress him with the dignity of my exit and general air of frosty disapproval.

Elizabeth called to me as I passed the door of her room, where she was reposing luxuriously on her couch, book in hand.

"Did you have a good time?" she inquired, with interest.

"No," I returned briefly; "horrid."

"That's too bad. And oh, look at your nose! How did you ever get so burned?"

Elizabeth has a straight little nose which is my envy as well as my admiration, and she is always very careful to guard it from too intimate an acquaintance with the sun, so I knew her exclamation was occasioned by genuine sympathy. Nevertheless, I refused her offers of cold cream and other first aids to the complexion rather ungratefully and went on to my room, where she promptly followed me.

"Did Mr. Bennett say anything about tonight?" she asked, as she settled herself on the foot of the bed.

"No; why should he?"

"You don't mean to say you have forgotten?"

"Forgotten what?"

"Elise, sometimes I think you must be in love—or, rather, I should think so were it any other girl. Don't you know that we give a dinner tonight? Our very first formal effort, to celebrate Lady Edith's birthday?"

I turned, brush in hand, and stared at her. I had indeed forgotten, altho our menu for the occasion had been discussed and our toilets decided upon that morning at breakfast.

"And that's why I was concerned about your nose," continued Elizabeth cheerfully, "and your neck, too, for that matter, for of course you must wear an evening gown, and we all want to look well. You had really better try the cold cream and other stuff."

This time I did not refuse, for I had a mental vision of my face, as the glass reported it, rising from the delicate lace of my white frock, and the picture did not please me. So I spent the afternoon in anointing my unfortunate countenance, and reflecting upon the frailties of man—thinking of him as a species rather than as a personality, and determining to let him severely alone in the abstract, even while meditating upon a proper course of discipline for the individual.

CHAPTER XIII.

"HOW well Lady Edith looks in evening dress," remarked Elizabeth, as we discussed the events of the evening after the departure of our guests.

"Mr. Blake evidently thought so," returned Gabrielle. "He had eyes for no one else. But she was stunning in that black gown."

"And Lord Wilfrid looked awfully distinguished," continued Elizabeth. "His quiet, reserved manner is very impressive, don't you think so? The Americans simply were not in it with the English."

"Blood will tell," said Gabrielle, who poses as being very democratic, but is at heart a thoro aristocrat.

"And Mary Anne's entrees were perfection," resumed Elizabeth, with great satisfaction. "She is a treasure. To think of cooking and serving that dinner all herself! What does it matter to such a genius if she has a dozen worthless sons?"

"What indeed?" I acquiesced, yawning, and proposed bed, but the others objected, saying that it was not late and they were very wide awake.

"Let's have a prowl," suggested Gabrielle, who loved to wander about the cottage and look at the ocean from all points of the compass the last thing before retiring, as tho she expected it to vanish during the night and must make the most of her time.

"Not in thin slippers," I protested, "and good clothes."

"There is no grass up here," she replied, "and we can hold up our skirts. Do come, Elizabeth, just for a little while."

I was sorry I had not gone also, as soon as they turned the corner, and, picking up my long skirt carefully, started in pursuit. I saw, however, that they were deep in one of the heart-to-heart conversations in which they sometimes indulged, and decided not to interrupt them, but to wait until they came back to earth and remembered my existence. So, after a moment's hesitation, I sat down on the steps leading to the slip, knowing they would certainly visit it before they went in, as it was Gabrielle's favorite view. Even tonight, when there was no moon and the outlook was therefore limited, I was sure she would not desert it.

Resting my chin in my hand, I reviewed the evening, which, from my own private and particular standpoint, had been a failure. Elizabeth had mentioned Lord Wilfrid's reserved manner, but to me he had seemed distinctly sulky, and I had more than once seen his sister look at him appealingly, and at last with an indignant sparkle in her brown eyes, after which he roused himself and conversed in a perfunctory manner with his neighbor—who happened to be my unfortunate self.

Now, I had fully intended to impress Gordon Bennett with the fact that he was still under the ban of my displeasure, and in the privacy of my own room had rehearsed a dignified bearing and certain imaginary speeches I thought would be very effective. It was therefore somewhat disconcerting to be politely ignored by the gentleman in question, who, beyond a civil bow and smile, had appeared unaware of my existence and had devoted himself exclusively to Elizabeth, who looked especially pretty in her pale blue princess gown, and whose nose, being entirely guiltless of sunburn, did not shine.

The air of jollity which had distinguished our little impromptu feasts seemed to me lacking on this more formal occasion. It was as tho our guests had put on another personality with their evening clothes, and I found it unfamiliar and hard to tolerate.

Lady Edith, to be sure, was a joy to behold, and talked with unusual brilliancy. Her white shoulders and golden hair were strikingly accentuated by her low-cut black gown, and the color came and went in her cheeks like the fitful spark of an opal.

Mr. Blake, the quiet, the self-contained, beside whom she was placed, let his soup grow cold as he looked at her, and had evidently forgotten the presence of any one else long before the appearance of the salad. By the time coffee arrived I decided he was hopelessly lost, and felt a sincere sympathy for him, for in the lace of her bodice gleamed the little gold key, and I knew it locked all men but one out of her heart.

I felt very sorry for them both, in the light of my recently acquired information. There were shadows beneath her eyes, and a repressed restlessness of manner which I attributed to overtaxed nerves, for I knew she felt it incumbent upon her to make a special effort to be agreeable, since the dinner was given in her honor. Perhaps, I reflected, the anniversary brought with it painful memories of other days, and for her sake as well as my own I wished it were over.

Well, it was over, and our guests had been gone for an hour, tho it was now but eleven o'clock. I imagined Gordon Bennett and his friend arriving at their island and discussing us over their cigars, with doubtless a cooling and stimulating beverage to refresh them after their exertions, and I would have liked to hear what they said.

Gabrielle often remarks that she never hears ice clink in a glass and smells a good cigar that she does not wish she were a man, and secretly I sympathize with her, altho I always make a point of disagreeing in a slightly superior manner, as tho such things were beneath contempt.

I was thinking of this now in a dreamy, half-conscious way, when I suddenly became aware that I actually smelled a cigar—and a very good one. Moreover, the odor came from beneath, and as the steps led directly to the slip the conclusion was forced upon me that some one was down there. Curiously enough, I was not frightened, but decidedly indignant. Some one was taking a great liberty with private property, I thought, and I wished I were brave enough to go down and order him—or them—away, forthwith.

There was, as I said, no moon, and I could not positively distinguish anything as I peered down into the darkness, but thought I saw a point of light like the end of a cigar, and certainly heard a subdued murmur of voices.

In another instant the slip and everything upon it stood out against the darkness with the clearness and accuracy of a picture thrown upon a screen, its every detail distinct and visible. After an incredulous moment, I understood, for I recognized the broad beam of white light which fell across the water with dazzling brilliancy. Our friend the searchlight had paid us many visits since that first night upon the slip, and we had come to regard it with an amused tolerance, and to watch for it, especially on dark nights or in bad weather. We seldom watched in vain, for it was a persistent and hard-working light and explored the island, or at least our end of it, with painstaking thoroness and regularity.

So I sat in the sheltering darkness on the top of the steps and looked down upon the illuminated slip, while my heart thumped audibly and I wished most ardently I had never ventured out.

For there were two men upon it, and an unlighted steam launch waited beside it. One of them knelt before the door of the boathouse, evidently trying to unlock it, while the other watched with interest, and finally produced a bunch of keys from his own pocket and selected one as he handed them to his companion, with apparent directions how to apply it. And I saw plainly that the man who supplied the keys was Gordon Bennett, who, with his friend Mr. Blake, was trying to force an entrance into our boathouse.

Another instant, and I sprang to my feet and fled incontinently, my fingers in my ears and my progress sadly hampered by the long trailing skirt over which I tripped and stumbled, and which, I will remark in passing, was irrevocably ruined.

I do not know why I ran, nor why I stopped up my ears, since I had not heard a word of any kind, and was certainly in no personal danger; but I rushed wildly on and finally cast myself breathless upon my bed, my pulses throbbing painfully and my whole being quivering with a sense of shame. For I had so nearly loved him. I knew it now, even as I knew his unworthiness. Had he not lied to me that afternoon? Lied about so simple a matter that I should then have understood he had something to conceal—something of which to be ashamed. And now he was trying to force an entrance to the boathouse. But why? Was he a common thief?

"Oh, no," I cried, aloud; "no, not that!"

Then I sat suddenly upright, for I remembered the safe in the dining-room, with the jewels locked in it—the pearls which belonged to Lady Edith's mother—and I remembered also my indiscreet disclosures regarding it, and the questions he had asked, even while professing his disapproval—keen, searching questions as to the exact location of the safe and the form of lock upon it. And I had told him everything he wanted to know willingly.

"Oh!" I cried again. "I'm a fool, and he knew it, and used me for a tool."

Therein lay the chief sting. He had used me as a tool, and my woman's vanity was wounded to the quick.

Going into the next room, I leaned out of the open window, looking toward the ocean and watching for something, I was not sure what. The searchlight was at work again, and by its light I saw a little dark boat steal away from our slip and make its way toward the point of the island. I could see two figures in its stern, so I knew the key had not been successful and our boathouse was still closed. I supposed also that the presence of the searchlight had frightened them away, and felt grateful for it.

I heard the voices of the girls, and returned to my own room, hastily removing my dress and slipping into bed. Tomorrow I would tell them, but not tonight—I could not talk tonight. I could not even think.

"She's sound asleep," whispered Gabrielle, after an inquiring peep over the bed. "It must be later than we thought."

"It's awful the way we forget the flight of time when we get to talking," returned Elizabeth, remorsefully, and they lowered their light and moved softly, in order not to disturb me.

But I lay with widely opened eyes, staring into the darkness, long after their quiet breathing told me they had gone peacefully to sleep. How hot the pillow was! I turned it restlessly, hoping the other side might contain a soporific influence and I could get away from the tormenting, even recurring question: What did he want in there? So far as we knew, the place was empty; why, then, should any man want to force an entrance?

Perhaps, after all, it was nothing that could not be explained. I would write him in the morning and tell him quite frankly what I had seen, and ask for an explanation. And he, of course, would answer promptly. Then I remembered the scarf-pin of the Sphinx's head, and knew that any explanation, no matter how plausible, would always be accompanied by a doubt in my own mind.

I remembered something else also—Mrs. Bundy's emeralds, and the supposition that the one who took them had departed without waiting for breakfast. Had he not by his own showing left the hotel very early indeed the morning after the storm?

I tried to put this thought away from me, but it returned again and again with hideous pertinacity, until, after a long time, my senses became dulled and I fell into an uneasy dose, where I heard Lady Edith demanding her mother's pearls of Gordon Bennett, while he insisted he was [illegible] them set into side-combs for me, and could not, [illegible] comply with her request.

Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of this interesting story. You will miss a great treat if you do not read it to the end. We will give you constantly the very best stories of entertainment that money will buy, so send in your subscription and take the Ledger regularly, if you are not doing so. You will not regret it.

* * *

Santa's Secret.

It was a bright, crisp morning, just before Christmas, in the year 19—. Mrs. Santa Claus was standing before her cheval iceberg mirror, in the unpretentious but cozy apartment occupied by the Santa Clauses, trying on a new fur robe that her husband had just presented to her. Always, about this time of the year, he gave her something nice all for herself, and hitherto she had accepted it with unfeigned pleasure. But recently Mrs. Santa Claus had been reading in the North Pole Yellow Borealis (and other reprehensible journals that the hired help took) of the great number of divorces and marital troubles which were taking place, most of them apparently due to the men. The women, indeed, were all beautiful, and all wronged, and somehow the atmosphere of this troublous condition had been getting on Mrs. Santa Claus' nerves. So it happened that when her husband came bouncing in, in his usual jolly manner, she turned around, with a couple of hairpins in her mouth, and said:

"Well, I suppose you are up to the same old game this year?"

"What game, dear heart?"

"Well, I notice that you usually begin about the first of November to shut yourself up in your worshop, and then about this time you always make me a nice present—just to keep me good-natured, I suppose. But——"

She looked at him severely.

"I should like to know what you do every year when you go away one afternoon and stay over night."

Santa Claus slapped his hand on his thigh. After all their years of mutual confidence this seemed to him the best joke he had ever heard.

"I'll be eternally frapped!" he exclaimed. "You don't mean to say that you suspect me—after all this time? You know perfectly well what I do when I stay out over night."

"I know what you say you do, but how do I know it's the truth?"

Santa Claus didn't know that his wife had been reading the yellow journals and had therefore imbibed the idea that every woman was a blonde angel and every man a criminal, and so he was at a loss to understand her suspicions.

"This is a strange thing," he exclaimed. "Here for years and years I have been going out every Christmas eve pursuing my favorite hobby—a man must have some recreation, you know—of giving away toys, and now, without the slightest warning, you accuse me of deceiving you. Now, if I was really a gambler, or a dipsomaniac, or in the habit of sneaking off without your knowledge, it would be different; but to accuse me of deceiving you—this is too much."

"That's all right," said Mrs. Santa Claus, in a hard, cold, yellow-journal voice. "I've heard that kind of talk before—I mean I've read about it—and I don't take any stock in it. You are altogether too cheerful. Along about the first of December you are feeling altogether too good. Something is bound to happen when a man feels that way. And I notice when you come home the day after Christmas you are all tired out. Oh, you can't fool me."

Santa Claus, as was natural under these trying circumstances, almost went to pieces at this sudden attitude on his wife's part. Not only did the injustice of it hurt him, but the thought of so much at stake made him lose for a moment his self-possession.

"No such thing!" he exclaimed. "You don't know anything about it. I don't like to boast, but if you had the remotest conception of my fame, if you knew that I was the best-known character in the whole wide world, and all done without the slightest attempt at advertising, done, indeed, because I love my fellow man—or, rather, boy—you wouldn't be so heartless with your suspicions. But it's always that way. No man is ever appreciated in his own home. I have only this to say, madam: You may think as you please; I must go out and to my work."

"Hold on! Wait a moment."

Mrs. Santa Claus turned on him almost savagely.

"What are you going to do?"

"I'm getting ready for my evening off, as usual."

"You are not going."

"Not going! Um! I guess I am."

"No, you are not—at least not as long as I am running this house. You must remember, my dear boy, that this is the age of woman, and if you think I am going to sit calmly by any longer and let you do as you please, you are very much mistaken."

"But," stammered Santa Claus, "those boys and girls! I simply can't disappoint them! It would be a terrible [illegible]"

"You needn't worry. [illegible] be disappointed—that is, if what you say is true—if you haven't been deceiving me. And I shall soon know. You can hitch up those reindeer and I'll go myself!"

"What! Take my place? Climb down chimneys, slide over roofs?"

"That's all right. There isn't anything a man can do that a woman can't. Where's your route?"

She grabbed out of his upper pocket a paper and flourished it over him.

"I'll find out whether you are telling me the truth or not!" she exclaimed. "I'll go to these places mentioned here and, in the meantime, you can be loading up for me, and prepare to stay home and do all the housework while I'm gone!"

And Santa Claus, as he went out to the stable, dropped a frozen tear on the hard snow finish and sighing softly to himself said:

"I'm innocent, all right, but what will happen to all my old friends? How can any woman cover so much ground in one night in a hobble skirt?"

Late on Christmas morning he was disconsolately sitting in front of the garage, shaking out some iceland moss, when a familiar tinkle in the distance caused him to look hurriedly up. Mrs. Santa Claus got out of an empty sleigh and, coming over, kissed him gingerly on his glowing cheek.

"Well, my dear," he said, "you see that I am not the villain that you thought. Didn't I tell you the truth? And how did you get on? Everything gone? Everybody satisfied?"

"I suppose I might as well tell you the truth," she said. "Now, I was not the one who was deceived, but you were—you are!"

"What do you mean?"

"It's really amusing—and in a man of your years, too! And you think that you are doing some good! Well, it didn't take a woman of my discernment long to find out the truth. You don't know, do you, that nobody believes in you?"

"Nobody believes in me!"

"Yes! Being a stupid man, you have come to think you are a kind of saint, and that you are making folks happy. Nonsense! Why, under their sleeves they laugh at you. The children tolerate

(Continued on Page 14.)

Fires in the Night

-:- Or, -:-

In Pioneer Days

By Willis E. Link

[Copyright 1916 by W. D. Boyce Co.]

Begun in No. 50, December 9. Subscriptions can begin with that issue or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER V.
A FOOLISH PROMISE.

TERROR and despair overwhelmed Tina and blotted out the preceding stress of mind. Alone upon the dark prairie and weak in Jay Bentley's hands, her situation indeed was desperate.

"There won't be anybody to interfere this time," she heard her assailant exult. "It's up to you how things are going to turn out," he went on in a low, intense tone. "I've gone plumb daffy over you and am ready to marry you tomorrow, or I will give you a month if you will swear to marry me then. What's the answer?"

He still held her fast with one arm, and as he asked the question he removed his hand from her mouth. She seized the opportunity to give vent to a piercing shriek, in her peril forgetting there was no probability of any one hearing her cry.

"None of that!" the brute said roughly, and clapped his hand back upon her mouth. "I want a 'yes' or a 'no' to what I want of you. If it is 'yes,' we can walk along to your place and by the time we get there, we can have everything settled." Again he removed his hand.

"No, no, no!" she cried desperately.

"Then we will stay out here two or three hours, and by that time you will agree to anything," the words fairly burned into her ear.

Awful comprehension came to her and the ground seemed to rock beneath her feet. She would have fallen if it were not for the two arms now around her.

"What's going on?" spoke a voice close at hand, and suddenly from out of the darkness a figure appeared. Bentley was so startled that he nearly dropped the limp form he held clasped in his arms.

"The devil!" he ejaculated in consternation.

"Jay Bentley!" exclaimed the one who had so opportunely come upon the scene, and the tone plainly expressed surprise.

Strength began to return to Tina at the welcome succor, tho it came from a source she might not have wished. The voice she heard was that of Fred Conway.

"Mr. Conway, save me!" she faintly implored.

"What does all this mean?" Conway sharply demanded of Bentley.

"It means I want this girl and am giving her a chance to say she will marry me," came the answer in a tone of defiance. "Now, you had better get along and leave us to settle the matter," he suggestively added.

"You have a queer way to make love, judging from appearances," Conway sneered. "Let her loose, Jay!" he commanded, for Tina was struggling to release herself from the intolerable situation.

"Do you dare to give me orders?" snarled Bentley.

"Do you dare refuse?" demanded Conway.

The two men stood and glared thru the darkness at each other, and after a moment the arm around Tina's waist slipped away, leaving her again free.

"Good boy!" said Conway sarcastically.

With a muttered curse Bentley disappeared into the surrounding gloom.

"It's a mighty fine thing I happened along," remarked Conway, emphatically.

"It surely is, and I am thankful for your assistance," responded Tina, warmly, and for the moment her distrust of the map had vanished.

"You must be all unstrung, but I will help you home," and the next instant he had drawn her arm within his own.

Tina's first impulse was to pull away, but this would appear prudish and ungrateful. He was acting as any gentleman should, but in spite of her reasoning the situation grew more distasteful every minute as they walked along so close together.

"It makes me boil to think of the danger you were in," Conway remarked after they had traversed some distance.

"Don't talk about it," the girl replied, shuddering as she thought of what might have been her fate.

"I wish I could always be at hand to protect you," came a passionate declaration, but further utterance was checked by the appearance close at hand of a person who had slipped up out of the darkness without being observed until this instant.

"Miss Pennington will have two escorts," spoke the stranger, and Tina recognized the voice of Percy Howard.

The man at her side growled a half-suppressed curse.

"Where in the devil are you going?" After a moment of embarrassment or anger—Tina could not tell which—Conway sharply addressed the one who had interrupted the impulsive declaration.

"To Older's," was the reply. "It is important that I see you," Howard added.

"You couldn't wait until morning," came sarcastically from Conway.

"It might be too late then," Howard replied, and it seemed to Tina as if there was a hidden meaning in the words.

"I met Jay Bentley back a short distance," stated Howard, after the three had walked along in silence for a few minutes.

"I don't suppose he told you what he had been up to," Conway spoke with sudden interest.

"No," was the brief reply.

"He followed Miss Pennington, and when she was out of sight and hearing of anybody, he got her in his arms, and no telling what the cuss might have done if I had not come up in time." The information was given rapidly and with a degree of eagerness.

"Where was Doctor Donald? I thought he was Miss Pennington's escort, judging from what I noticed at the celebration." The voice and manner of the speaker indicated an intense degree of perplexity.

Tina explained the reason for her being alone out upon the prairie. While the two listened, the darkness hid a peculiar smile upon the face of Conway and a troubled frown upon the brow of Howard.

"Miss Pennington, I am going to ask you to adept a course which will seem strange to you," Conway suddenly said, after the three had been silent for some time. "It will be very natural for you to inform the Olders and others of Jay Bentley's actions tonight. I wish to assure you that such a course will cause you and, perhaps, Doctor Donald"—the speaker gave a peculiar inflection to the name—"far more trouble than if you should keep silent. When this affair is public, you will be a subject for gossip, unjustly, of course, but, nevertheless, it will surely be distasteful to you. I wish to say in strictest confidence that I can bring a pressure to bear upon Jay Bentley that he will not try to resist. I wish you to promise to say nothing to any living person about the affair with Jay, and I will promise you that in the future this man will not interfere with you in any way."

"I advise you to comply with Mr. Conway's request, and I will also give the same guarantee," declared Howard.

Tina was considerably mystified at the request of the two men, but she was not in a position to think clearly. The Older house loomed up a few rods away, and she soon would be safe again within its walls. There was relief in the thought that she need fear no more the attentions of Jay Bentley. "The least said, the soonest mended," probably was her best course.

"I'll say nothing about Jay Bentley," she stated, with convincing positiveness, and in after time she realized how foolish it was to give such a promise.

The Olders had not retired. They were beginning to feel worried over the absence of Tina, for just as they were driving from the street at Ledyard—of course they were at the celebration—they had met Doctor Donald hurrying toward his stable, and were informed of his intention to drive home immediately with his companion of the day. Their rising uneasiness was calmed by the arrival of Tina, and after a few minutes of general conversation, Conway and Howard retired for the rest of the night to the former's room.

Tina remained with the Olders to discuss the nonappearance of her escort more fully than she felt like doing in the presence of the others. The man and wife were as unable to give an explanation as was the girl. Just as the latter was about to retire for the night, the three were startled by a knock at the door.

When Older opened the door, Doctor Donald stood revealed. His hair was disheveled, his garments spotted with dirt, and an expression of anxiety clouded his countenance. At sight of Tina, his face cleared, and a fervent "Thank God!" came from his lips. The next minute he was seated in a chair facing the other occupants of the room, and while they listened he briefly told his story.

"When I left Miss Pennington," he began, "I went directly to the stable to get my horse. As I entered the door, some one struck me upon the head with a club of some kind. I suppose this really is what happened, for I remember nothing until I found myself back of the stable, as it afterward proved, a handkerchief tied tightly over my mouth, my feet bound together and my hands treated the same way. Soon after regaining consciousness, I heard some one enter the stable, but I was powerless to attract attention."

"It must have been the clerk from the store sent to find out what he could," interrupted Tina.

"Probably," assented the narrator. "I made a desperate effort to free my hands," he resumed, "and finally succeeded in doing so. It was not long before I stood upon my feet free from my bonds, but my head felt sore. At once I went down upon the street, but the stores were all closed and the town dark, save at the bowery where the dancers were still engaged. I could learn nothing and could form no idea as to what had become of Miss Pennington, so I decided to come here and see if, in some remarkable way, she had returned home. I quickly hitched up my horse, and here I am," finished the Doctor.

"I think your injury should be attended to," Mrs. Older remarked, stepping to the young man's side. "There is a big lump, but the skin is not much broken," she announced after a minute's examination.

"I shall doctor myself, but I shall get back to Ledyard immediately, now that I know Miss Pennington is safe," he declared, arising.

He was urged by the Olders to stop for the night, Mrs. Older insisting that she could fix up a couch upon the lounge in the best room, but he would not listen to this, and soon was on his way back to town.

While Tina listened to the Doctor's narration, she instantly decided that Jay Bentley was responsible for the dastardly assault. She was about to express this conviction when it came to her she had made a promise to remain silent as to her own affair, and it was because of what had happened to herself that she believed both assaults were by the same person—Bentley. If she kept her word, it would be better to express no opinion as to the Doctor's assailant. Anyhow, there need be no fear of further trouble because of the ruffian, for a conviction possessed her that in some incomprehensible manner Conway and Howard would keep their agreement.

Doctor Donald had his suspicions, but he knew he lacked the proof. Should he have Jay Bentley arrested? He pondered over this while he rode back to town, and in the morning he had not arrived at a decision. Recalling the knockdown in defense of Tina, a motive could easily be assigned, but this was not sufficient. If guilty, perhaps Bentley would be shrewd enough to provide an alibi. As the day wore on, the case became more perplexing, for while public sentiment was free to implicate Bentley, no convicting evidence could be presented, and in the afternoon Fred Conway came forward with a story which completely exonerated the suspected man.

Conway had sauntered into a knot of men discussing the assault and voicing their suspicions. He remarked that he knew little about Bentley, and did not care to know more. However, it was a question of simple justice, and he wished to clear the suspected man, even if he were a coarse rowdy. Conway then told how he had felt so badly the night before, after mingling with the happy crowd most of the day, that he wished to be alone, so he had walked some distance out of the town. Of course the men all appeared properly sympathetic at this statement. He had finally turned back, he informed them, and on the way he passed a man lying by the roadside. This individual was Jay Bentley, sleeping off a drunk. This was at the time the assault upon the Doctor was committed. This, surely, was an alibi.

Doctor Donald did not admire the man, to say the least, but he had no reason to doubt Conway's statement. If Bentley was innocent, then who was the guilty man? Rack his brain as he might, the Doctor could not think of a possible enemy. Robbery was not the incentive, for not a cent nor an article had been taken. Hence, the problem was perplexing.

That evening Conway informed Tina of his producing an alibi for Bentley. She was nearly as perplexed as the Doctor. Judging from her own experience out upon the prairie the night before, Conway's account looked reasonable. But she remembered that her assailant's breath did not smell of liquor, as upon that memorable occasion in town, and he had no appearance of being intoxicated. He must have recovered from his drunkenness with surprising suddenness. Why should Conway come forward with an untruth in this matter? Why should he wish to help Bentley after such an occurrence of the night before? Was this really keeping his agreement with her? It would seem as if it were an opportunity to drive the outlaw from the community. Why did not Conway seize at this advantage?

Turning these things over and over in her mind, it was midnight before Tina fell asleep.

The next morning Mrs. Older decided to wash some clothes, and some time after Conway and Howard had left for the former's farm, Tina took a basket of the garments to hang upon a line stretched between two posts at one side of the house. She noticed Howard returning along the road, and was surprised when he turned aside, instead of going on toward town, and approached to where she was occupied.

"Miss Pennington, I wish particularly to talk to you," was his abrupt salutation.

She looked at him in wide-eyed surprise.

"While I expect you to keep your promise of the other night, no matter what happens, I wish to warn you of danger," the visitor said intensely.

Tina could only continue gazing at the speaker.

"It is not Jay Bentley I am warning you to beware of, but Fred Conway," said Howard, slowly.

"Oh!" and Tina drew a breath of relief.

"You rather like the idea of being in his mind," came in a low, savage tone.

"What is it to you?" she flashed, and her eyes had a gleam of anger.

"By the Eternal!" growled the man, and he seemed upon the point of exploding with rage.

He turned his back upon the girl, and for several minutes he appeared to be making a desperate effort at self-control. At last he turned and faced her again.

"I will tell you why I am interested," he said in a low, even tone. "I met Conway the first time months ago and have run upon him several times since. I have found him to be unscrupulous and unprincipled. It means ruin for all that is dear in life for a woman to fall into his hands. Because I know this, I wish to warn you in time, for you are far too good to suffer such a fate."

The man stopped and gazed off to the houses at Ledyard that could be seen in the distance.

"Why do you think I am in any special danger?" Tina inquired, and her spurt of anger was gone, leaving an air of wearied indifference.

"Because he loves you—in his way," was the reply.

In complete consternation, Tina stared at the man who was gazing off across the prairie.

"If this be true, he had better get his mind in another condition, for I do not, never have and never will care a rap for him," she declared emphatically.

"Thank God!" came in an intense tone from Howard.

"Now, since you have tried to play hob, you may get out," came a voice behind the two, and as they quickly turned, the girl in startled surprise and the man with every appearance of abject fear, Fred Conway stepped forward.

"Go!" he commanded Howard, and pointed toward the road.

CHAPTER VI.
ANOTHER FIRE.

WHEN Percy Howard turned at Conway's command and walked slowly away, Tina gazed at the retreating figure with contempt. Why did he not remain and hold his ground? For some inexplicable reason he had defamed or exposed Conway behind his back, but did not dare to repeat the accusations to his face.

"I found I had to go to town, and getting in sight of you I noticed your caller, so I thought I would speak to him about a little matter; but I surely had no idea of hearing such a flattering description of myself," Conway remarked lightly, after Howard had started down the road.

"What reason, I wonder, had he to come to me and so unbosom himself?" Tina murmured more to herself than to her second visitor.

"Can't you understand?" the question was asked in a meaning tone.

"I surely do not," came the reply with emphatic positiveness.

"You are smashing hearts right and left. There are Jay Bentley, Doctor Donald, Fred Conway, and last—but one who does not intend to be least—Percy Howard," laughed the speaker, mirthlessly.

"I don't enjoy this ridicule," said Tina, coldly, while bright spots burned in her cheeks.

"Pardon me, but I am diagnosing Percy Howard's case, for he really is dreaming these things about you. For this reason he draws wrong conclusions from what he sees. He knows I am your friend, but he is afraid I am in his state of mind, so he must prejudice me in your estimation. He knows Jay Bentley is out of the way. I don't know what he will do when it comes to Doctor Donald——"

"Stop! I have listened to enough of this foolishness!" and Tina stamped her foot in angry impatience, while a burning flush came over her face.

"Well, you can see the philosophy of Percy's actions, and you can judge what stock to take in his wild assertions," Conway drawled, as he started toward the road. The next minute he was walking rapidly in the direction Howard had taken.

Tina finished hanging out the rest of the clothes, trying to regain her normal composure before going back into the house where Mrs. Older was at work. In her wildest flights of fancy the girl had never dreamed of more than one lover, and it was really disconcerting to consider four in the field. She hoped one, Bentley, had surely been eliminated. When it came to Conway and Howard, the situation was mystifying. She could not believe that the latter was in the state of mind the former had asserted. When it came to Conway, perhaps Howard was right, for she recalled the interrupted assertion after her rescue from Bentley, to say nothing about other actions which had so tried her peace of mind. But there was no need to tax her brain further over the puzzling angles presented—she was free to reject the attentions of all these possible suitors. But down in the bottom of her heart she made a mental reservation of one individual, and in a minute a feeling of joy and peace stole into her heart.

The next morning at the breakfast table Conway announced that a small building had been completed upon his farm, and he would "keep bach" in this until his large dwelling was erected. It was a great relief to Tina when the boarder had taken his departure. A day or two afterward she hardly knew whether to be surprised or not when she learned that Howard was "baching" with Conway. That same afternoon, as she was sitting upon the porch absorbed in some sewing, some one drove up and stopped in front of the house. Glancing up from her work, she beheld Conway, and she comprehended at once that he had purchased a fine horse as well as the most expensive harness and buggy she had seen for many a day.

"What do you think of it?" gayly called the owner.

"You have a very stylish rig," replied Tina, indifferently.

"You are not enthusiastic," and his countenance betrayed chagrin.

"Why should I be?" she carelessly responded. "You are the one to be pleased—and I think you ought to be," she added with more animation, for it came to her that it was indeed a very attractive outfit.

"This is the first time I have hitched up to ride in this rig, and I wish you would make the event more notable by riding to town with me," said Conway, in a smooth, persuasive tone.

"I am flattered, but I have no occasion to go into town," answered Tina, coldly.

"You had better go—the ride will do you good and you can attend to a little matter for me," said Mrs. Older from behind Tina. She had come out in time to hear Conway's request, and she had no thought of the antipathy the girl felt toward the former boarder.

"All right." And Tina breathed a sigh of resignation. Her love and appreciation would cause her to do almost anything for her benefactress.

She was soon ready, and Conway helped her into the buggy. They had proceeded but a short distance when they passed Doctor Donald. Tina remembered the other occasion when the same thing happened at almost the identical spot. While upon the other occasion she had a feeling of dissatisfaction at her situation, this time she knew she was positively ashamed of herself.

A bridge on the direct road to Ledyard had been washed out by a violent downpour of rain the night before, and this compelled Conway to make a detour by which he passed the site of his former home. Tina was surprised at the indifference he displayed when the location was reached, for she supposed recollection would cause some show of feeling. Under the circumstances, she did not feel called upon to refer to the events connected with the destroyed cabin, but she had a struggle to keep back the tears at the thought of her own connection with the place.

"I have a partner in keeping bachelor's hall," Conway remarked just before reaching Ledyard.

"So I have heard," Tina replied dryly, and the tone did not escape notice by the man.

"Terrible funny proposition, you think, but I might say a few words about it." He hesitated a moment, then continued: "You remember I did not say a word against Percy, only that because of a certain feeling he was trying a little scheme. I do not hold this against him, but from the standpoint that all is fair in love and war, I excuse him. He may make another break of this nature some time, but he has begged my pardon and promised never to tell any more wild yarns to you about me. Why he should leave the hotel and beg to stay in the shack with me is beyond my time, but he says he is waiting for money, and when it comes he, too, will buy land and build. Anyhow, if I were the disreputable fellow he described me to be the other day, do you think he would care to stop with me?"

The voice had a triumphant ring as Conway asked the question.

"It doesn't look reasonable," Tina acknowledged, but down in her heart there remained a conviction that Percy Howard had told her the truth. "Let's talk about something else, for I am not particularly interested in the matter," she added with an air of weariness.

"I'm agreed," Conway spoke briskly and at once plunged into some gossip of the community.

In a few minutes they were upon the main street of Ledyard, and in another hour the girl was set down at home again.

The sun was setting, Tina had finished her work for the day, and the Doctor was driving back from what had been, undoubtedly, a professional visit. At sight of the girl he drove up to a post and tied his horse, then stepped to the porch where he soon found a seat in close proximity to the loadstone which attracted him.

Time passed quickly, and it was growing quite dark when Doctor Donald took his departure. However, before doing so he had obtained Tina's consent to accompany him to a big show which was advertised to appear in Algona in a few days.

The young man drove slowly on his way back, because of the darkness and the condition of the road. He, too, had to take the roundabout course to the town. But the increased distance and slow progress were not worrying him, for he was indulging in the delightful occupation of building castles in the air. Somewhere in these dreamy structures would shine out the face of the beautiful girl with whom he had just passed a happy hour at the Older home.

Not far ahead the road he was on intersected the main one to Ledyard, and not far from the turn was where the Conway cabin had stood. He was to cross a slough, as a swale is called in a prairie country, which was several rods across, and had reached the middle, when a figure glided out from the tall grass upon the side of the track and stealthily approached the man in the buggy. A lasso-like rope was flung over the Doctor's head, and the next instant he was jerked backward out of his vehicle. The horse, startled by the unusual stir behind him, broke into a brisk trot and disappeared into the darkness, to be found in the morning upon an adjacent strip of prairie, with no particular damage done.

The contact with the ground, altho it was in a sponge-like condition, gave the Doctor a jar that nearly made him lose consciousness. The ruffian gave him no time to recover his senses, but was immediately upon him, holding a cloth saturated with chloroform over the face. In a moment the assaulted man was lying motionless upon the ground.

When Doctor Donald recovered consciousness, he found himself lying upon his back securely bound and gagged. He discovered his helpless condition when he tried to move, and also that his whole body ached. Then he recalled how some sudden, mysterious power had hurled him from his seat in the buggy.

The fall upon the ground had jarred and wrenched his body quite severely. Why was he so securely bound? It must be that some person in some incomprehensible way had thrown him out of the vehicle. Who could it be? In spite of Fred Conway's testimony, the Doctor held a conviction deep down in his heart that Jay Bentley was guilty of the assault that Fourth of July night. Had the villain again tried his hand?

He had reached this point in his mental efforts when he realized how completely

WM A ROGERS
ROGERS 1881

No Money In Advance

30 Days Free Trial

Remarkable Sale of Silverware

Here is without doubt, the grandest opportunity to secure one of the most beautiful 26-piece chests of genuine guaranteed Wm. A. Rogers Silverware. See the remarkable bargain price and terms.

Everyone who has seen this tableware says it is the most beautiful they have ever seen. We want you to see it. You will be delighted and amazed. That's why we send one to any reader of this paper without remittance of any kind whatever. No money in advance, 30 days' free examination. Simply write your name and address in coupon below. We will at once send you one. When it arrives, examine every piece, see what a wonderful bargain this is, and if you decide that it is the greatest bargain you ever saw,

Then Pay Us $1.00

and pay balance in small monthly payments of only $1.10 each until our special limited bargain price of only $9.80 is paid, or you can pay all cash, $9.80; no discount whatever for cash. If you're not pleased with your bargain simply return the chest to us.

1881 Rogers A-1

Think what remarkable tableware this must be. What a bargain this really is, when we are ready and willing to send it to you on such unheard-of terms. Each piece guaranteed full size for table use and made of extra heavy genuine silverplate. Guaranteed 25% heavier than standard plate. Absolutely nothing more artistic or beautiful in table silverware. Each piece stamped "1881 Rogers A-1." The unqualified money-back guarantee of quality and wear of the Wm. A. Rogers Co. and the Hartman Co. goes with each outfit. Chest is made of hardwood, beautiful golden oak finish, inside draped with white lining cloth, handles and clasps highly polished metal.

This offer is made to prove that it pays to deal with Hartman's, the largest home furnishers in the world selling remarkable bargains on easiest payment credit terms. Hartman's with its $12,000,000 capital, numbers among its satisfied customers more than 2,000,000 families in every state in the Union. We will have an enormous sale on this grand bargain, so do not delay, send in the coupon below at once.

No References Asked

Send no references—no guarantee—no money. Just the coupon and we will at once send the chest of silverware to you.

Hartman Mammoth Free Catalog

brim full of the most stupendous bargains ever offered—Furniture, Dishes, Stoves, Jewelry, Household Furnishings of every kind. Rugs and Carpets of every shade and color. You will be pleased when you see this catalog. Write post card today for free Catalog "S." Be sure and mention Catalog "S." But send coupon today and see silverware.

HARTMAN
FURNITURE AND
CARPET CO.,
Silverware
Dept. 20
Chicago,
Illinois

Illustrations of Knife, Fork, Tablespoon, Teaspoon, Sugar Shell and Butter Knife, Showing Rich Effect of Exquisite Beauty Leaf Design
Each Piece Full Size For Family Use

2/3 Actual Size

HARTMAN
Furniture & Carpet Co.
Silverware Dept. 20 Chicago, Ill.

Send me at once the 26-piece chest of genuine Wm. A. Rogers Silverware. If satisfactory, after examination, and I decide to keep it, I will pay you $1.00, and the balance in monthly payments of $1.10 each, until I have paid you a total of $9.80; otherwise, I will return the chest of silverware to you at your expense.

Name..

Address..

City..............................State..............

gagged he was, for he could not utter a sound as he attempted a call to some one who must be passing not far away. He was sure he heard the tramp of a team and the rattle of wagon wheels. Where was he? Judging by what little he could see and smell, he was in a small barn. Where were the horses that should be in the structure? Now he knew, for it was not far from where the Conway house once stood that he had been overcome and it was in the stable which was still standing that he lay helpless. He became thoroly convinced when he heard another wagon rattle along, probably coming from Ledyard.

The moon must be coming up, because he could see things a little more plainly. He tried to raise his head to glance around, and succeeded in getting a glimpse of an open door, where, shining thru the opening, the moon cast a streak of light across the end of the stable. If he could only get to the door! He tried to roll in that direction, but he was too well bound with a rope and attached to something in the building.

What was the object of such careful precautions against an escape. If the horse went into town, people would start out in search for him, and he would be found in a few hours. Even if the horse was taken away by this unknown enemy, in the morning the family where he boarded would become alarmed over the situation—for invariably they were informed in some way when he was forced to prolong his visits into the country—and a search would be made by a company of men, especially along the way between Older's and Ledyard. What good would it do Jay Bentley, or the one who committed the outrage, to tie up his victim so thoroly for the night? After the assault, the ruffian had plenty of time to get away from the vicinity.

Hours passed, and the Doctor was no nearer a conviction as to why he was left in such a situation, and he was still just as helpless in spite of continuous efforts at freeing himself. He had managed to twist himself slightly into a position where he could rub the cloth bound around his mouth against a partition between the stalls, but had made no perceptible gain in loosening the bandage.

He had become exhausted, and was lying quietly trying to recuperate for another determined effort, when he heard something between a sob and a groan.

The Doctor was startled at this unlooked-for sound. The wind was rising, for he could hear it sough around the lone building, but this sound was not the wind. What he heard came from a human being, for the tone came again and there could be no mistake about this. Just then a belated teamster passed in his wagon, and no other sound came to the Doctor's ears. As the rattle of the wagon receded, sobs broke forth again, coming, apparently, from near the doorway to the stable. Surely some one was in distress, but what was the nature of this grief? Was the individual confined, or was it sorrow over some matter? If the former, why was there no call when the wagon passed? If the latter, why was this deserted barn at this time of the night chosen as a time and place to mourn?

More desperately than ever the Doctor tried to get the bandage from his mouth, but with slight, if any, success. He tried to pound against the side of the building with his feet but they were too securely fastened. If he could only do something to attract the attention of the person who was now giving away to sobs, no matter what the consequences, it would be a relief.

The moonlight had long ago disappeared from the open doorway, but gleams could be seen coming thru the cracks between the boards upon the west end of the stable. Then these streaks were blotted out. Probably the sky was overcast with clouds, for it was much darker inside where the helpless man was lying. That the sobbing person stood in the open doorway the Doctor felt sure more by the sense of hearing than by sight.

Realizing his utter helplessness for the first time during the long hours of the night, the strong young man gave a groan of despair. The sound was weak, but it must have reached the ears of the grief-stricken person, for there came a stifled ejaculation of horror, and the next instant the unknown was flying from the scene. The Doctor heard the hurried footsteps grow fainter and fainter until he could distinguish nothing more. The mysterious person evidently had been frightened away by the noise or the fear of discovery.

Another hour passed, then again the Doctor heard a faint noise.

Some one was stealthily approaching the stable. He felt certain the quiet prowler was just outside the building. For some mysterious reason a fear came into the heart of the helpless man, and he made no effort to make a sound. Only four or five feet away from where his head was resting, at a crack between the boards, some one was listening. Why was this? The man inside lay still and breathed scarcely at all, for he was afraid.

The nervous strain was becoming unendurable, and he felt that he must exert his strength in a supreme effort to break his bonds, but just then he heard the listener at the crack leave that position. Would he now come inside?

The Doctor was far from being a coward, but under the circumstances it is not to be wondered at if his nerves were becoming unstrung and he should go cold at the thought of what might be the outcome if the mysterious visitor came into the stable.

What was that sound? A scratch of a match. Was it a man lighting his pipe? Now the person was hurrying away—yes, running fast. The Doctor could hear the footsteps plainly. Why was this?

Suddenly crackling sounds could be heard, and by a twist of his head he saw streaks of light thru the cracks between the boards a few feet away. The barn had been set on fire!

Now it was plain why he had been left so helpless. His enemy, whoever he was, would be satisfied with nothing less than death, and had chosen this method to conceal the crime.

The Doctor thought of the woman who had met her fate in the cabin which had stood not a hundred feet away. Now he was to suffer the same horrible end so near the spot of that other fire in the night. His beautiful castles in the air would never materialize. Tina Pennington would never know how much she had become to him. The bliss of holding her in his arms and tasting her lips in a rapturous kiss of love he would never know.

These thoughts flashed thru his mind in less time than it takes to tell. Then, as he knew the flames were leaping up the side of the building, he struggled like a madman for a moment, but it seemed to no purpose.

Death was near at hand—and a most terrible death at that.

"My God, help me in this awful extremity!" he prayed to the One who alone could hear the appealing cry.

This strange story leads to very extraordinary situations and dramatic episodes. The reader will find it eminently worth reading to the end. Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of it. The surest way to get the Ledger is to subscribe for it and have it come to your home regularly. Today is a good time to attend to this.

* * *

NOT COMING.

They can't come home for Christmas—and mother sighs, and stands
And looks out of the window, their letters in her hands,
And trys to hide her feelin's, and I—well, here I've set
A-lookin' at the paper, an' haven't read it yet.
The headlines and the items is jumbled every way—
"They can't come home for Christmas" is all they seem to say.

I know what mother's thinkin'; she's lookin' down the lane,
And mindin' how she'd counted to go to meet the train—
I'd polished up the sleighbells until they looked like gold
And seemed as full of jingles as any bells could hold,
And we'd 'a' gone in early, and they'd 'a' tumbled down
And laughed an' waved their "hellos" to all they knew in town.

The sky is gray and gloomy; the house is dark and still;
The cedar trees is lonesome where they stand on the hill—
And we'd picked out the best one, the one we knew would be
The very finest cedar to make a Christmas tree.
The clock here on the mantel is tickin' sad and slow:
"They can't come home for Christmas. They're not a-comin'. No!"

And mother at the window looks out and down the lane,
And I stare at my paper—but stare at it in vain,
For all the type is tangled and all the letters blurred
In one unendin' sentence, repeatin' word an' word—
The only news the world holds today for her and me:
"They can't come home for Christmas" is all that I can see.

W. D. N.

* * *

St. Nicholas.

Oddly enough, the original Santa Claus—the saint from whom the children derive their pet Christmas wondermaker—was not at first associated with Christmas day. Even now St. Nicholas' day is observed in some European countries on the saint's own day, December 6. It is on that day that he brings to little children gifts or a stick, according to their merits.

St. Nicholas' day, like that of other saints, is not his birthday, save in the sense that it was the day when he was born into heavenly life. The real St. Nicholas, from whom comes our Santa Claus, the patron saint of Russia, who has many churches named for him, lived and performed acts of kindness in the fourth century and died and was transported to Paradise December 6, 343.

At Bari, Italy, where he was buried, his day was observed as a holy day. It grew to be the custom for little children, whose special patron he was, to leave out their shoes and stockings on the eve of St. Nicholas' day, confident that he would not forget them.

In the morning these were never found empty of the things dear to childhood's hearts and the children believed that the good St. Nicholas had left them. In convents where young girls were educated, silk stockings were hung on the door of the abbess with little notes informing the saint of the special desires of each maiden. And, lo, miracle of miracles, in the morning the saint had heard and answered. So American girls and boys of the twentieth century find their stockings filled on Christmas morning thru the bounty of Santa Claus, whom they call St. Nicholas in Christmas songs and stories, tho the more familiar name of Santa is oftener on their lips.

The little Italians who thus are favored by St. Nicholas on his own day, December 6, expect nothing from him on Christmas day. It is the Christ-child, the bambina, who brings them gifts on his own birthday.

In Austria a St. Nicholas procession was for many generations an important festival. It was composed of men and boys, some dressed as angels, others as creatures quite the opposite of angelic. On the eve of December 6th this procession passed from house to house. The children in each home were catechised as to their sins and virtues. If they had been good the angels rewarded them; if naughty they were threatened with punishment and left without gifts.

The legend on which the good saint's gift-making disposition is based is this: A poor citizen of the time of St. Nicholas had three daughters, to whom he could give no marriage portion. St. Nicholas wished to relieve them of their poverty. On three successive nights he went secretly and threw into their window a purse of gold, one for each. It is to be hoped that with such help each maiden secured a worthy husband.

Because of this generosity St. Nicholas became the gift bringer and the patron saint of maidens.

* * *

The Christmas Box.

The Christmas gift goes back to the Magi, who brought to the infant Jesus their tokens of fealty as in their own lands they would give presents on the birth of a king's son. But gifts at this season are of very ancient origin and were quite universal. It is not plain where the custom originated of putting gifts in stockings by the fireplace; perhaps it is an evolution from the Scandinavian custom of putting the shoes of the family in a row before the hearth in token that the members of the household would walk the same way—that is, live in harmony during the year.

The Christmas box is a money gift, and has a commercial side to it quite apart from the love gifts of Christmas day. It can at least be traced back as far as the Paganalia instituted by Servius Tillius, who caused an altar to be erected in each village upon which the people might lay their money.

A Christian development of this was the invoking of a saint's protection for a merchant vessel by the people putting some money in a box which was placed in the ship as a protection from storms and misfortunes, and the box was not opened—at least it was not supposed to have been opened—before the ship's return.

Out of this doubtless grew the idea of people putting money in a ship's treasury as an investment which entitled the giver to a share in the profits. A comparatively modern instance of this is given in the celebrated story of Dick Whittington and his cat. Having nothing else to put in the venture when his master's ship went out, Dick put in his cat, which cleared the rats from an infested island and was the means of bringing great fortune to the vessel.

In Russia the clergy call upon their people at this time, and it is expected that a money present be given them. The Christmas in early England included intercessions to the saints to procure forgiveness for the sins that might be committed during the debaucheries of that time, and those who wished to be included in the pardon must put some money in the Christmas box to pay for it. Servants were expected to get "box money" from their employers so they might also be enabled to pay the priest for his masses. This evidently gives us the origin of the Christmas box as we now find it in England, where it is a demand upon the householder which he dare not evade.

Boxing day, the day after Christmas, is a legal holiday in England, and everybody who has served the family from the outside, calls for his gift money. The persons entitled to it are messengers, newsboys, ash and garbage collectors and the postman, whose reward is sometimes quite substantial, as every one getting service at a single address is expected to contribute. At this time the tradespeople give Christmas boxes to the servants who have made family purchases from them.

* * *

A Gift for Father.

The chief business before the house, after every one else has been provided for, is selecting a Christmas gift for Father. Many possibilities at once suggest themselves. Father could stand a new overcoat. Yes, but who has the price to buy Father a new overcoat? Answer: Nobody, not even Father.

Father also needs a new pair of goloshes, a new comb, another mainspring in his watch, ten tons of coal, a toupee for the top of his head, six or eight new pairs of shoelaces and a gross of collar-buttons. He also has a sneaking desire for half a dozen celluloid collars that can't be told from the real thing, because his linen ones always melt when he gets mad at the stenographer.

Let us, therefore, consider these articles carefully: Goloshes—goloshes cost too much. Cut 'em off the list. Comb—a comb's too cheap. Anyway, there are only seven teeth missing from the comb which Father now has, and the missing teeth just match Father's missing hairs. New mainspring to watch—this would necessitate asking Father for the watch, and then his Christmas gift wouldn't be a surprise. Coal—Father always buys the coal. Why should we rob him of his pleasures? Toupee—too unromantic. Shoelaces—undignified. Collar-buttons—see shoelaces. Celluloid collars—a repulsive and roughneck thought. Let's give him a necktie.—Judge.

* * *

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM.

When marshaled on the mighty plain,
The glittering hosts bestud the sky,
One star alone, of all the train,
Can fix the sinner's wandering eye.

CHORUS:

Hark! hark! to God the chorus breaks,
From every host, from every gem,
But one alone, the Savior speaks,
It is the Star of Bethlehem!

Once o'er the raging seas I rowed;
The storm was loud, the night was dark;
The ocean yawned, and rudely blowed
The wind, that tossed my foundering bark.

Deep horror then my vitals froze;
Death-struck, I ceased the tide to stem,
When suddenly a star arose;
It was the Star of Bethlehem.

It was my guide, my light, my all;
It bade my dark forebodings cease.
And thru the stormy danger's thrall
It led me to a port of peace.

Now safely moored
I'll sing first in night's diadem,
Forever and forever more,
The Star, the Star of Bethlehem.

—Henry Kirke White (1800.)

* * *

Good Advice.

As Jones took his seat in the usual morning train, he coughed gently.

"Hallo, old chap!" exclaimed a friend. "Got a cold?"

"Only a little one," replied Jones.

"But you ought to be careful," admonished the other man. "That cough needs attention."

"Think so?"

"Yes; it's a nasty little cough, that."

"Goodness!"

"And it's tricky weather just now, you know. Lots of influenza, pneumonia, and chest troubles about."

"That so?" said Jones, beginning to look scared.

"Yes; a man I know had a cold just like yours, a week or so ago, and in ten days he was dead."

"Great Scot!" exclaimed Jones turning pale.

"Fact! The doctor said he might have pulled thru if he hadn't worried so much. Take my advice and try not to think about it."

Splendid for Bad Coughs, Colds, Bronchitis

An Inexpensive Home-Made Remedy—Gives Surest, Quickest Relief.

Anyone who tries this pleasant tasting home-made cough syrup, will quickly understand why it is used in more homes in the United States and Canada than any other cough remedy. The way it takes hold of an obstinate cough, giving immediate relief, will make you regret that you never tried it before. It is a truly dependable cough remedy that should be kept handy in every home, to use at the first sign of a cough during the night or day time.

Any druggist can supply you with 2½ ounces of Pinex (50 cents worth). Pour this into a pint bottle, and fill the bottle with plain granulated sugar syrup. The total cost is about 54 cents and you have a full pint of the most effective remedy you ever used.

The quick, lasting relief you get from this excellent cough syrup will really surprise you. It promptly heals the inflamed membranes that line the throat and air passages, stops the annoying throat tickle, loosens the phlegm, and soon your cough stops entirely. Splendid for bronchitis, croup, whooping cough and bronchial asthma.

Pinex is a highly concentrated compound of Norway pine extract, combined with guaiacol and is famous the world over for its healing effect on the membranes.

To avoid disappointment ask for "2½ ounces of Pinex" with full directions and don't accept anything else. A guarantee of absolute satisfaction or money promptly refunded goes with this preparation. The Pinex Co., 204 Main St., Ft. Wayne, Ind.

Shelter for Santa

BY HOLLIS CARTER

A subdued "Oh!" echoed from all sides as Santa Claus slipped down the chimney and made his jovial bow to the children.

They had been told that they must keep very quiet, or the Christmas saint would go away without leaving any presents, so the involuntary "Oh!" was hushed almost as quickly as it was formed.

The children of the streets glanced about apprehensively. Perhaps even this would result in their being turned into the street by the fat policeman who had been detailed by the captain to see that no piratical youth led a raid on the tree ahead of time.

But nothing so untoward happened. Officer Cassidy still beamed upon their pleasure, and at the other end of the room Santa Claus in a funny falsetto voice was making a speech of welcome, and telling them how glad he was that the young ladies of the guild could give such good reports of every child there.

"There are some presents here," he concluded, "one for every child, and candy and an orange, too."

He approached the tree and Bess Fairley stepped forward to assist. In some fashion she stumbled, and the great tree, with its twinkling lights, went crashing toward the side of the platform.

There was a flare of lights as the candles caught the resinous needles, and in an instant the flames had communicated with the long streamers of evergreen that festooned the room.

Cassidy was all action.

"Turn in the alarm on the corner," he commanded the janitor, who had stolen in to see the fun, then raising his voice he continued, "Coom on out uv this, every blissid wan of yez, or I'll run yez all in."

Up front the young girls of the guild were pleading with their guests to be quiet, but Cassidy's stentorian voice had a better effect. The children, who had huddled in little groups in the aisle, uncertain which way to turn, now made a rush for the door, steadied by Cassidy's admonitions into avoiding a panic.

Then the members of the guild hurried after them as the firemen rushed up the stairs.

Amy Vaughn, in her Santa Claus costume, huddled in a doorway on the opposite side of the street and watched the progress of the fire, unconscious of the biting cold. The December dusk had fallen and no one noticed the shivering figure, or if they did they supposed her to be one of the mock Santa Clauses set up on the street corners by the Salvation Army to solicit contributions for the Army's Christmas dinner to the poor.

Only Cuthbert Bonner, turning in at his own doorway opposite the burning building, noticed the shaking figure.

"How now, Sir Santa?" he greeted. "Is the street corner too cold, or have you deserted your post of watchfulness for the fascinations of a fire?"

Amy shrank back into the shadow. Of all persons, Cuthbert was the last she wished to see in her present plight. The heavy white beard and the full wig were ample disguise, and she had only to disguise her voice.

"I'll go on in a moment," she promised.

There was little need of vocal disguise. Her teeth chattered so that she could scarcely make herself understood.

Something in the tones attracted Bonner's attention and he looked more closely. The costume was more elaborate than those provided by the Army. The long, loose coat was of thin cotton flannel, as were the others he had seen, but the cut was not the same and the wig and beard were expensively made.

In a flash he remembered there was to have been a Christmas tree in the burning hall. This was some lad whom they had impressed to play Santa Claus.

"Burned out and your reindeer team ran away, eh?" he said, with a chuckle. "Come up to my rooms, my boy, and shed those absurd garments while I have a cab called for you."

Amy shuddered. "Shed those garments, indeed!" She was glad that Cuthbert thought her a boy, but the mistake might be embarrassing and she muttered some excuse about going on presently.

"Nonsense!" was the reply. "You'll freeze to death in ten minutes more. Come on."

He held open the door, but Amy shrank back into the vestibule. Without more ado Bonner caught her by the arms and led her inside. His rooms were on the first floor, and presently she was standing in his sitting-room wherein an open fire diffused a grateful warmth.

"Now, warm up and tell me all about it," commanded Bonner, as he deposited his burden in front of the fire. "I bet I can tell you. Your clothes are burned up and you are afraid to go home in these. That's right?"

Amy nodded her head. Her teeth had stopped chattering now, and she was afraid to speak. Bonner did not appear to notice her omission, for he ran on.

"Let me give you a piece of advice, my boy," he said, half-seriously. "No matter how you trick yourself out, you hold on to your money after this. It's a good plan to follow. My man's making you a cup of hot coffee, then I'll lend you one of my overcoats and you can go home in a cab. It's not often that I have opportunity to offer shelter to his highness of Christmas Land, and I want to do it up brown. I'd offer you something stronger, but it's not good for boys. Feet wet?"

Amy shook her head, tho the thin slippers she wore under the oilcloth boot tops were soaking wet. A sneeze betrayed her and Bonner gave a shout.

"You little Ananias!" he cried, "they are wet! Take them off while I get you some slippers."

He vanished thru the doorway, but he was back in a moment, with a pair of fur-lined slippers.

"They are a trifle big for a boy like you, but they're dry and warm," he said as he came toward the girl. "Slip off those things and get into these. Come," he added, as Amy made no move to obey. "You've at least been foolish in a good cause."

He knelt to take off the wet footgear, but as he raised one unwilling foot and saw the dainty slipper which the oilcloth hid, he rose to his feet and stepped back.

"I beg your pardon," he said, in slight confusion, "tho it is your own fault for letting me continue in the belief that you were a boy. I remember now, a girls' guild hired that hall."

"You were not to blame," said Amy. "It was only your kindness. If you don't mind I will put these on. I will call you when I am done."

When she did call Bonner entered with a tray.

"Here is the coffee," he said briskly, "and when you are ready to go there is a cab at the door. This coat will give you protection from the cold. You can send it back by the cabman. He will be paid for the round trip, so you need not worry about that."

Amy smiled as she saw that he had provided a mustache cup for the coffee. It was like his thoughtfulness. She need not even remove the masklike beard.

"I've a maiden aunt who sends me one every Christmas," he explained, as he saw her look at the cup. "She lives in the country where such things still flourish, and she sends one every year because she knows that bachelors break things so often. Dear old soul, she doesn't know I have a round dozen on the shelf at this very moment. I'll get the thirteenth tomorrow."

"I wonder if you will ridicule my present," said Amy, suddenly speaking in her natural voice, and tearing off her beard. "Your year of probation is up and my answer is——"

"Yes?" he asked, as he sprang forward.

"Yes," assured Amy. "I'm sorry, dear, that I ever doubted you. It was all a mistake. Your hospitality to Santa Claus is the final evidence of your goodness."

"Bless the old saint!" said Bonner, "I'm glad I offered him shelter."

"I'm glad too," said Amy, demurely. "He has brought me the best present of all."

❧ ❧ ❧

Peculiar Gifts

"Well," said the man in the tortoise-shell spectacles, addressing his wife, "it's about time for your Aunt Amanda to write us that Santa Claus is going to be very poor this year and that there will be no presents for us, nothing doing in that quarter at all, whatsoever, emphatically not."

"Yes," replied his wife, "it is about time for her annual letter to that effect. She has written us like that for the last ten years or more, but as she always follows up the letter with some very nice presents we needn't worry."

"She always alarms me, just the same," grumbled the man in the tortoise-shell spectacles. "I hope you have written to your cousin in Kalamazoo that we are not making any presents this year."

"No, I haven't. In fact, I have led her to expect a present."

"What? Why did you do that?"

"Because she has married a very wealthy automobile factory owner."

"That's pretty hard luck," declared the spectacled man. "Another rich relative! That means another purse! We have seven rich relatives, and they all give us purses every Christmas.

"When I was a boy I had an uncle who gave me banks. Sometimes he gave me very ingenious banks that did all kinds of funny stunts with money when it was offered them. But the trouble was to get material for them to operate on. And it's the same way with purses. They are lovely purses, with all kinds of convenient compartments, and while I have no doubt it is a lot of fun to put away money in those tidy little compartments, one for tens, another for twenties, and so on, the darned things are not practical for me, as the works are shut down all the time for lack of contracts.

"I like people who give me money; at least, I know I would like them if I were given the chance. Other people get money for a present. Why can't we? Money is the only thing that is never duplicated, and it wouldn't make any difference if it was.

"And even if I did have money I wouldn't put it in a purse, where I could lose it all at once. That's all purses are for—to lose. Whenever I have anything I want to lose I always put it in a purse. That's what I did with your letter to Cousin Euphemia inviting her here to spend Christmas."

"You did? Well, there's where you did a most costly thing, because Cousin Euphemia is very fond of turkey, mince pie, fruit cake, fruit of all kinds, eggnog and theaters at Christmas time, and she has plenty of money and always foots the bill for the whole thing. And she never fails to put a five-dollar gold-piece in the toe of her host's Christmas sock."

"Maybe I can find that purse!" gasped the spectacled man, hopefully.

❧ ❧ ❧

AT CHRISTMASTIDE.

Hail to the Christmastide again.
Let all the joy-bells ring;
Come, lads and lassies, here's a song
That every heart should sing:
"Peace—Peace on earth! Good will to men!"
Sing it with might and main;
And may your hearts indorse the words,
Over and o'er again;

For, loving "Peace," strife flees afar
From us, as days go by;
And with the wish "Good will to men,"
How can we help but try
To do our best—"good will" to show
To those we daily meet?
'Tis loving as we would be loved,
Makes living glad and sweet.

The dear Christ's birthday! honored now
Where'er His name is known;
The "Little Child" of humble birth,
Yet Heaven and earth His own!
How wonderful that just for us
That glorious birth took place,
And men beheld Divinity
In that dear baby's face!

How wonderful that for our sakes,
That Lord who gave us life,
His own, at last, for us laid down
'Mid sorrow, pain and strife!
Oh, let us, then, for His dear sake,
His blest commands obey,
And in our hearts hold Peace and Love
To greet the Christmas day.

❧ ❧ ❧

Her Yearly Task.

"There, of course, is Aunt Maria, Aunt Lizzie, and Aunt Jane; they're pretty old, but have to go down on the list again; and Uncle Joe and Uncle Pete and good old Uncle Lem; I wish I really could decide just what I should give them. And Cousin Nell and Cousin Kate, and Cousins Belle and Sue, and Cousin May and Cousin Madge must be remembered, too. And Cousin Sam and Cousin Bill, and Cousins Jack and Ned—I'm sure if I had any more I would go off my head.

"There's Grandma Smith and Grandpa Smith, Grandma and Grandpa Jones—what shall I get for folks who have rheumatics in their bones? There's Pa and Ma and Brother Hal, and Sisters Maud and Grace; before I get thru I think I'll be in the crazy place. Now what can I give all the girls who always give to me? Gladys, Hannah, and Hortense and Lulu—let me see, and Clementine and Rose and Pearl and half a dozen more—my gracious, I must make a trip thru every Brooklyn store.

"And there is Frieda, housemaid girl, and Mary Ann, the cook—ere I forget I'll put their names right down now in my book. And, oh, what shall I give to Will? Tee hee, what shall it be? I feel sure that a diamond ring he will present to me. He says he only wants a kiss, and maybe that is so, but how to hang it on a tree there is no way I know. A nice silk four-in-hand might do, with stripes of green and white; I know he wouldn't be like pa and say it was a fright.

"And now I think I'll go to bed and put aside my list; tomorrow I am sure to think of some one I have missed. I will be bankrupt when I buy the things from ties to muff—yes, Christmas comes but once a year, and, gracious! that's enough."

Stop Tobacco
EASY-TO-QUIT is a harmless, effective treatment for Cigarette, tobacco and snuff habits. Can be given without patient's knowledge in coffee, tea or other drink. Odorless, tasteless, purely vegetable. Send name and address for trial treatment in plain wrapper FREE! Treatment inexpensive. Send no money. Write NOW! THE ROGERS DRUG & CHEMICAL CO., 75 Lincoln Inn Court, CINCINNATI, OHIO.

TAYLOR
WILL PAY YOU MORE FOR FURS
PRICES HIGH SHIP TODAY
We have a big demand for all kinds of furs. Ship at once while market is good. Don't delay. A postal card request will bring you our new catalog booklet "Opportunities for Pleasure and Profit in Trapping" also price list, shipping tags, etc. ALL FREE. Write today.
F. C. TAYLOR FUR CO.
530 FUR EXCHANGE BLDG. ST. LOUIS, MO.

LURIT
It Will Attract All Animals to Your Traps
Send 25c in stamps for a large trial bottle. Guaranteed to increase your catch or money refunded.
FREE We will also send you a large Skunk hunting picture in 6 colors, "The Unwelcome Surprise" and our latest price lists. You get full value for Furs when you ship us. No charges for Selling as We are Direct Buyers.
UNITED STATES FUR COMPANY, Dept. U 209 N. First St., St. Louis, Mo.

MORE $$$ FOR FURS
Trappers and buyers everywhere write today for our big circular, market reports and latest price list. Furs are high. Earn extra $$$ this winter. No matter whose list you have, get ours; it tells why we pay most $ $ $ for furs and pay all charges. No commission or express deducted. All furs held separate. THE BERLINER COMPANY Drawer 447 - CORRY, PENNA.

WE BUY HIDES & FURS for SPOT CASH 10 to 50% more money to ship your Hides and Furs to us than to sell at home. Get our 450-page Hunters' and Trappers' Guide. Regular encyclopedia, $1.25. We tan Hides and Furs. Write for Price List and tags. Andersch Bros., Dept. 57 Minneapolis, Minn.

FREE Beautiful Book About Taxidermy
Learn at home by mail to mount birds, animals, tan skins. Be a taxidermist. Delightful art easily learned by men and women. Decorate home and den. Make big profits. Wonderful new art. Write Today for this wonderful Free Book and our amazing offer. N.W. Sch. of Taxidermy, [illegible] Elwood Bldg., Omaha, Neb.

NEW FEATHER BEDS, ONLY $6.40
6 POUND FEATHER PILLOWS $1.00 PER PAIR
New, clean, odorless, sanitary and dustless feathers. Best ticking. Satisfaction guaranteed. Write for FREE catalog SOUTHERN FEATHER & PILLOW CO., Dept. 121, Greensboro, N. C.

Wrestling Book FREE
Here's your chance to be an expert wrestler. Learn easily at home by mail from world's champions Frank Gotch and Farmer Burns. Free book tells you how. Secret holds, blocks and tricks revealed. Don't delay. Be strong and healthy. Handle big men with ease. Write today. State your age. Farmer Burns, 5019 Ramge Bldg., Omaha, Neb.

EAT HONEY Shipped direct to you. Pure New Honey from wild flowers. 10 lb. can $1.25; 12 lb. can $1.35; 30 lb. can $3.30; 60 lbs $6.60; 120 lbs. $13.00. Sample 20c, postpaid. Circular free. Agents Wanted. H. H. Thale Bee Farm, Maywood, Mo., Box 51.

BE A DETECTIVE
Earn from $150.00 to $300.00 per month; travel over the world. Write C. T. LUDWIG, 126 Westover Building, Kansas City, Mo.

PATENTS How to Obtain a Patent. Write for list of Inventions Wanted. $1,000,000 in prizes offered for inventions. Our four books sent free upon request. VICTOR J. EVANS & CO., 683 Ninth, WASHINGTON, D. C.

919 CARDS New Styles Gold Bevel Edge Hidden Name, Silk Fringe Envelope and Post Cards; 300 Rich and Racy Jokes; 1 Pack Fun, 1 Escort and Love Cards; Star Bean Calendar, Big Sample Book Cards, etc., all Two cents. UNION CARD CO., 30 Columbus, Ohio.

SKUNK We pay top prices for Skunk, Mink, Muskrat, and all raw Furs. Price list free: M. J. JEWETT & SONS, REDWOOD, N. Y. DEPT. 27.

600 XMAS CARDS Novelties, Seals, Views, &c. All 10c
All colors, gold, silver, etc. 4 pkgs. 25c. 20 pkgs. $1.00. LUXE CO., 4838 Champlain Avenue, CHICAGO

The Only Way.

"He says he's saving money."
"So?"
"Yes: I wonder how he does it?"
"Perhaps he's quit eating."

Heavy.

"They say a lot of the bread you get now is underweight."

"That so? Well, my wife helps to make up the average."

CHRISTMAS GIFT SUGGESTIONS

Piling Up.

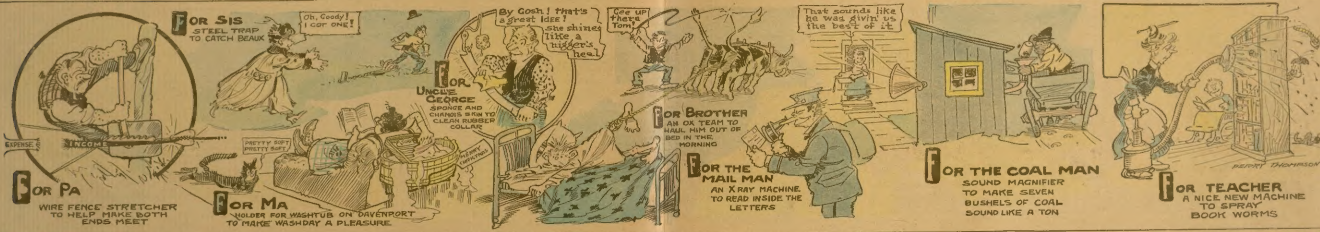
"Poe left only one or two unpublished poems."

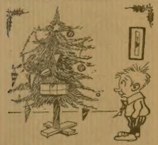
"I excel, there, anyhow," said Rhymster. "What a bunch I'll leave."

Contemporary.

"Miss Ann Teek has had her house furnished in colonial style."

"Well, she ought to feel thoroly at home amid such surroundings."


FOR SIS
STEEL TRAP TO CATCH BEAUX
Oh, Goody! I GOT ONE!
EXPENSE
INCOME
FOR PA
WIRE FENCE STRETCHER TO HELP MAKE BOTH ENDS MEET
PRETTY SOFT
PRETTY SOFT
FOR MA
HOLDER FOR WASHTUB ON DAVENPORT TO MAKE WASHDAY A PLEASURE
MERRY CHRISTMAS
By Gosh! that's a great IdEE!
She shines like a nigger's heal
FOR UNCLE GEORGE
SPONGE AND CHAMOIS SKIN TO CLEAN RUBBER COLLAR
Gee up there Tom!
FOR BROTHER
AN OX TEAM TO HAUL HIM OUT OF BED IN THE MORNING
FOR THE MAIL MAN
AN X RAY MACHINE TO READ INSIDE THE LETTERS
That sounds like he was givin' us the best of it
FOR THE COAL MAN
SOUND MAGNIFIER TO MAKE SEVEN BUSHELS OF COAL SOUND LIKE A TON
PERRY THOMPSON
FOR TEACHER
A NICE NEW MACHINE TO SPRAY BOOK WORMS



The Kid—"Gee! Christmas ain't what it used to be when I was a youngster."

Sociability.

"I'm afraid father-in-law doesn't care much about me," said the young man. "He finds fault with most everything I do."

"Nonsense," replied the wife. "You don't know his ways. He is treating you just like one of the family."

CHANCE TO CRUSADE.

An eight-hour day for mother—
  Now wouldn't that be fine?
She has a lot of bother,
  But never does repine.

Altho she has much worry
  Combined with heaps of work,
She gets into no flurry
  Nor ever tries to shirk.

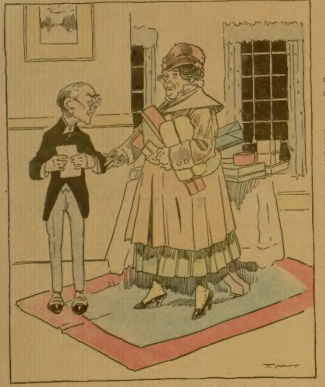
Apparent zeal disclosing,
  The statesman wags his jaw,
But no one is proposing
  An eight-hour day for ma.

There Must Be a Santa Claus.

One pound of sugar.
A genuine egg.
Six pieces of coal in box.
One lamb chop.

It was Christmas morning. As the only son of the millionaire sprang forward toward the chimney and his eye fastened upon the articles, a complete list of which is given at the beginning of this story, he uttered an exclamation of delight.

"Just look, mamma," he cried, "what a wonderful life-saver of a Christmas I'm going to have!"—Life.



Wifey—"I wish I had a flying machine; then perhaps I could get thru with my Christmas shopping."

Hubby—"Yes. Basing my judgment on the way the bills are coming in, what you need is a buyplane."

Went to Night School.

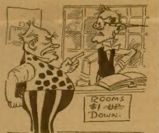
Pat and Mick were discussing the rights and wrongs of a job, and stout and strenuous were the arguments on either side.

"Look here! Say I ain't telling the truth? Look here," said Pat, producing a newspaper and flourishing it under Mick's eye. But Mick ignored the proffered literature.

"I don't want to see no newspaper," he said, loftily. "What I knows I knows."

"And that ain't much," said Pat. "Don't want to see the newspaper, he don't. Why? 'Cos he can't read—unedicated, that's what he is."

Immediately Mick's ire rose. "I'm as well edicated as you, Pat," he said, with dignity. "But as I learnt it in a night school, o' course, I can't read in the daytime!"


ROOMS $1 ~~UP~~ DOWN.

Hotel Proprietor—"Remember this, the first lie you tell me you're fired!"

New Clerk—"And I wouldn't blame you a bit if you did, sir!"

Employer—"You're fired!"

Must Have Been Cold.

A New England salesman, known to his friends as "Windy," tells a story of its being cold in Wells River. Once when he was there it was so cold that as soon as he spoke a word it was frozen and dropped to the floor of his room. In the middle of the night it grew warmer, and he was awakened by some one talking. The sound seemed to come from the floor. He got up, lit the light, and found that the frozen words were melting and returning the conversation that he had had the evening before.

Broken-hearted.

"What's the matter with young Mrs. Gadder?"

"She's broken-hearted and says Mr. Gadder no longer loves her."

"Why does she think that?"

"She wrote a letter to Santa Claus asking for a set of furs and gave it to him to mail."

"Well?"

"He mailed it!"

Wife Did the Spending.

Mrs. Kandid—"If it hadn't been for his wife Barton would have squandered his entire fortune."

Mrs. Porter—"What did she do?"

Mrs. Kandid—"She just anticipated him."

No Fear.

"Some women would be willing to make a husband stay at home and do the cooking."

"Henrietta wouldn't," replied Mr. Meekton. "She wouldn't intrust me with anything so important."

Worried.

Parker—"What's wrong? You seem very worried."

Streeter—"I am. I wrote two notes—one to my brother to ask if he took me for a fool, and one to Miss Golding, asking her if she would me mine. While I was out somebody telephoned, 'Yes,' and for the life of me I can't find out which one of 'em it was."

Fooled.

"The doctor suggested that I live on water for five days."

"On water?"

"Yes, he told me that a trip across would do me good."

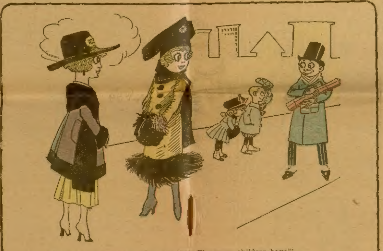
Best of References.

The cook is leaving today and wants me to give her a recommendation, but I don't know what to say."

"You might say she is a good worker."

"A good worker! She's anything but that."

"Oh, I don't know. She has worked us for thirty dollars a month and her board, hasn't she?"



"What nice manners those polite little Thompson children have!"
"Yes. They are always like that just before Christmas."

His Wish.

Montague Glass, the creator of Potash and Perlmutter, says an acquaintance of his, a clothing manufacturer on the east side of New York, received a call from a city salesman representing a notions, trimming and button house. The visitor began to spread out his samples.

"Put 'em up! Put 'em up!" said the manufacturer in a tired-business-man tone. "I wouldn't care to look at nothing what you got."

"But, Mr. Cohen——"

"S 'nough! I won't look. Please go away!"

The salesman gazed at him admiringly.

"Mr. Cohen," he said, "I only wish one thing—I wish I had only fifty customers like you."

"I told you I didn't wish to see nothing what you got."

"Sure you did; and that's why I says I wish I had only fifty customers like you. Instead, I got two hundred!"

Glad of It.

Jenkins was nearly always in a state of "stony brokenness," and his friends had all begun to avoid him.

One morning he tackled Benkins in the street before the latter had a chance to escape.

"I say, old man," he began, "I'm, in a terrible hole. I want some money badly, and haven't the slightest idea where on earth I'm going to get it from."

"Glad to hear it, my boy," retorted Benkins promptly, as he edged his way toward a handy corner. "I was afraid that you might have an idea you could borrow it from me."

Rise and Fall.

Officer (as company is temporarily about to vacate trench which has been reported mined)—"You two will remain here and if there is an explosion you will blow a whistle. You understand?"

Private Spuds—"Yes, sorr! Will we blow it going up or coming down, sorr?"

Economics.

"I'll give you something to eat if you'll chop wood for it."

"Yes, lady, only it will be cheaper to feed me in advance. Choppin' wood gives me a terrible appetite."

Exactly.

"Do you know Robert Bruce won his own way by watching a spider persevere?"

"Great Scot!"

Getting It All.

She was fair, yet were there traces of tears on her cheeks as she reclined against the velvet cushions. And small wonder! For had she not only yesterday quarreled with the beloved Bertie?

Yes, indeed. And now, would he ever return? Would he take in earnest those hot words in which she had told him never to see her again?

Listen! A step on the gravel outside. A ring at the bell. A voice.

Ah, it is he! Swiftly rising, she turned down the light even as the door opened. Then she threw herself into those manly arms and hid her rosy face against that blue serge.

"Darling, I'm so glad you've come! I wanted to settle everything—everything!"

"I'm very glad to hear that," replied the gas inspector, "because this bill that I've called about is now a quarter overdue!"

Answering the Charge.

Away down East a man was recently charged with having violently dragged his wife from a certain meeting and compelled her to return home with him.

The man let the story travel until he had a fair opportunity to give it a broadside, and then replied as follows:

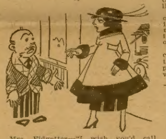
"In the first place I never attempted to influence my wife in her views nor her choice of a meeting. Secondly, my wife did not attend the meeting in question. In the third place, I did not attend the meeting myself. To conclude, neither my wife nor myself had any inclination to go to the meeting. Finally, I never had a wife."

Merely Exposed to It.

The head of a well-known school for girls, where many fair students have been grounded in languages and other branches of knowledge, had a pupil who resolutely refused to study and whose parents were finally requested to withdraw her, as it was evident that she was making no progress. This they did, but a few weeks thereafter the preceptress was considerably astonished to receive a letter from the girl's mother which ran:

"I should be so glad if you would give my daughter a reference for French. She took it from you for three months."

The preceptress replied: "I am sorry that I cannot give the recommendation. Your daughter certainly was exposed to French here, but, unfortunately, didn't take it."



Mrs. Fidgettes—"I wish you'd call Willie in the house and punish him severely. He's been out in the yard whistling the same thing all afternoon and it annoys me dreadfully."

Her Husband—"That's not Willie whistling. It's a bird."

Mrs. Fidgettes—"A bird? How I love the dear little feathered songsters!"

Soon Gone.

When the doctor called to see the baby its mother informed him that the medicine left for the infant the day before was all gone.

"Impossible!" declared the surprised physician. "I told you to give him a teaspoonful once an hour."

"Yes, but John and mother and I and the nurse have each had to take a teaspoonful, too, in order to get baby to take it."

Well Fitted.

"Yes, grandma, I am to be married during the bright and gladsome yuletide."

"But, my dear," said grandma, earnestly, "you are very young. Do you feel that you are fitted for married life?"

"I am being fitted now, grandma," explained the prospective bride, sweetly. "Seventeen gowns!"

Fitness of Things.

The Kink—"What do you mean by waking me at this time in the morning?"

The Valet—"Pardon, your majesty, but the water main has burst and the ground floor of the palace is under water."

The Kink—"Then bring me my admiral's uniform."

Sigh of a Sufferer.

"I'll tell you what to do for that cold," said the solicitous friend.

"Please don't. I've taken so many different kinds of prescriptions for this cold, I don't believe it's any longer what's the matter with me."

LACKS.

I'd like to have an ingle nook,
  A double one or single,
Where I could sit and read a book—
  But then I have no ingle!

If I knew where the welkin is,
  Or if some one could bring it,
I'd make it cheerfully my business
  to go and ring it.

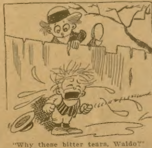
Could I secure a hue and cry—
  I don't know how one plays it—
But anyway, I'd gladly try,
  And willingly, to raise it.

A Cold Christmas.

Mr. Stretcher—"Yes, it's cold, but nothing like what it was at Christmas three years ago, when the steam from the engines froze hard and fell on the line in sheets."

Mr. Cuffer—"And yet that wasn't so cold as in '87, when it froze the electricity in the telephone wires, and when the thaw came all the machines were talking as hard as they could for upward of five hours."

Mr. Longbow—"Well, gentlemen, the coldest year that I can remember was in the Christmas week of '84, when the very policemen had to run to keep themselves warm."



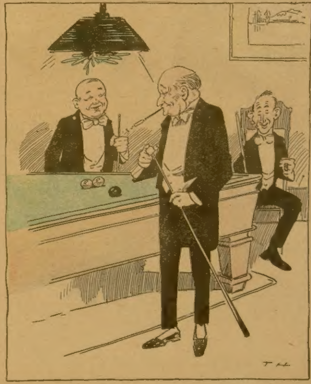
"Why these bitter tears, Waldo?"

"Woo-hoo! Jimmie sez there ain't no Santa Claus an' I'm too—boo—hoo—little to lick him."

Looking Ahead.

Friend—"What is the idea of putting out a 1918 car two years in advance?"

Auto Dealer—"So if it breaks down and you take it to a garage to have some little thing done to it they will have it done in time to still be a current year's model."—Life.



"The balls seem to kiss readily today."
"No wonder. Somebody has hung a sprig of mistletoe over the billiard table."

A Matter of Time

By Lucius Withers

AFTER an absence of twenty years Marlsworth was back home. Not as Marlsworth, mind you, but with a carefully cloaked identity. Do not set this down to his credit. Place it to the account of his specific sense of humor. And Marlsworth's humor was his own.

William Marlsworth, alias Henry Hampden, retired cattle king if you please, carefully adjusted his black bow tie and slipped into a Tuxedo coat. He smiled more or less sardonically at the reflection which looked out at him from the mirror. He let his glance rest on his crooked nose and his scarred forehead and cheeks, and on his thick white hair.

Marlsworth remembered vividly what time that nose had relinquished Greek outline to become the thing it now was. That had been the result of one swiftly vicious bicep-thrust. The white hair had come to him more slowly, but quickly enough, he considered. The scarred forehead he had got in a fall which followed the blow which broke his nose. As for the scars on his cheeks, Arizona Ike was quick with a gun in barroom brawls.

Marlsworth did not waste much time in remembering that he was 52 years old, nor did he ponder over the fact that his father and mother had died at 70, or thereabouts, carrying no gray hairs to their graves with them.

He did decide, however, that no one would ever recognize the grizzly bearded, but not wholly unlovely face that confronted him in the glass as that of the Billy Marlsworth of twenty years before.

Marlsworth got into his top hat and coat. He felt rather amazed that the outward signs and symbols of gentility, such as evening clothes and a top hat had not lost their usage with him. He snapped off the light, and a moment later was shot down to the first floor.

He lingered for a few moments in the lobby watching the crowds drift in and out. He was thinking that Chicago had changed considerably in twenty years. He wondered if Cora had changed as much in the interim.

"It's a long time to remain away from one's wife, and then drop in on her suddenly without warning," thought Marlsworth. *He did not even know whether she had married again. If she had—well, he would not disclose his identity.* But Marlsworth did not believe that she had married again. That wouldn't be like Cora. He would learn about it tonight.

Tonight Marlsworth was going to his old club four blocks up the avenue from the hotel. He was going as the guest of a man who had been his friend in the old days, but if Harmsgrave had not recognized him that morning he would not recognize him tonight. Marlsworth was sure of this.

Marlsworth made his way out of the hotel and into the street. He found his top coat comfortable against the sharp September wind blowing off the lake. As he made his way northward along the avenue he dwelt pleasantly on his clever scheme for coming back as unobstrusively as he had departed. He chuckled when he remembered that he had returned almost as drunk as he was when he went away.

With no compunction of conscience he reviewed, as he had reviewed on numerous other occasions, some of the particulars of the desertion of his wife. He had tired of her fault-finding and of her jealousy. Why had she been ever after him to take up the serious business of life? They had money. Well, he had money now, too. It would be a pleasure to let her know this. And Marlsworth was as proud of his newly gained wealth as if he had won it with his own hand and brain. He was not a stickler in these little matters.

Beating against the wind he smiled as he remembered that he had left home with a dim feeling that he would return some time. But how long that returning had been delayed! He had never known whether they had searched for him. He had been rather too ashamed to return or to write—not because this shame took any deep hold on him, but because he shrank from answering the questions of his friends. And then, he had just drifted. This was very characteristic of him. It was also characteristic of him that he drifted always down stream. Down stream, with him, had meant the rapid descent to bibulous levels wherein one's nose may be broken, one's face scarred and one's hair quickly and surely whitened.

Tomorrow, in all probability, he would go to Cora and let her know that he was a rich man. Then would he sun himself in the light of her approbation. For would he not tell her that those twenty years had been twenty years of effort, to show her that he was a man among *men; and would not his fortune corroborate his story?*

Marlsworth's conscience did not trouble him because the money had come by one of those twists of chance which set copybook maxims at loggerheads.

He wondered what his friends would have thought had they seen him this day two years ago. On that occasion he had arrived at the ranch of John Simmons—Simmons, foul-mouthed, bestial bachelor and ranch-owner. Marlsworth had been hungry, dirty and consumed with an intolerable thirst which only one beverage would allay. The memory of that day dried Marlsworth's tongue. He was just crossing a street intersection. He suddenly felt as if he trod in the desert of Sahara, but half a block to the left he caught sight of a sign which indicated an oasis. He glanced at his watch. There was still a good hour and a half until his dinner engagement at the club. He made his way quickly into the shade of the sheltering palms that grew from green tubs.

Marlsworth seated himself and ordered. With a tinkling glass before him, he wondered what Arabian conjurer could have told a tale stranger than that setting forth the affection between these two derelicts—John Simmons, millionaire, and Billy Marlsworth, his unkempt drunken cook's scullion. Yet the affection did grow up between them, and when, twelve months later, Simmons' debauch days were suddenly ended in a paroxysm of delirium tremens, he left all that he possessed to his cook's helper. This was quite natural. Simmons was without relatives and the two were wonderfully alike, save that the one had been gifted with a tireless money-making energy not vouchsafed by the gods to the other.

Marlsworth chuckled aloud as he remembered with what care he had planned his return. Three months on the ranch, rounding up the scattered ends, the remainder of the time spent among the imitation Egyptial fleshpots of Dallas, had prepared him for tonight and tomorrow. He thought of how he had worked to get, thru friends of his dead benefactor, letters of introduction to the very men with whom he had rubbed shoulders twenty years before. Well, he had got them! A wry smile twisted his face when he thought of his broken nose and scarred cheeks and forehead. He would never have believed that the blow delivered in the back room of an El Paso saloon would have stood him in good stead. At the time he had not considered this an angel in disguise any more than he had considered Arizona Ike's bullet scars in the light of future assets.

Marlsworth drained his glass for the second time, and again looked at his watch. There remained five minutes until the time of his appointment with Harmsgrave. Harmsgrave had once been his friend, but he had not recognized him when he presented his letter of introduction that morning. After that had come the invitation to dinner at the club.

Marlsworth wondered if any of his old acquaintances would be there. He wondered, too, how they would receive tomorrow the news that Billy Marlsworth had come back to his wife—and incidentally played a stupendously clever trick on Tommy Harmsgrave. None of the shame of the situation reached Marlsworth. He had money which had not come to him thru Cora. That sufficed for him.

Harmsgrave was lounging in the reading-room when Marlsworth found him. A few minutes later the two men began their dinner.

"I have never been in your State, Mr. Hampden," said Harmsgrave, after they were seated and served. He spoke of Texas in identically the same manner that he would have spoken of Delaware or Rhode Island, forgetting, or perhaps never having stopped to consider, that Texas geographically approximates an empire rather than a commonwealth. A real Texan would have resented this. Marlsworth did not resent it.

As Harmsgrave talked, the pseudo-ranchman's fancy was playing with the fact that twenty-six years ago he had won Cora Eldridge from the man who sat across the table from him. But Marlsworth's mind did not dwell on the fact that Harmsgrave had sought to infuse some of his own manhood into the man who had married the woman he loved. Marlsworth had never been conscious of this in the old days. He had put Harmsgrave's efforts down to an attempt to belittle him in Cora's eyes. Therefore he had resented them.

"It's a great little old State. You should visit us down there some time," he answered finally.

For the third time since the two men had met, Harmsgrave looked at the other with a half-puzzled expression in his eyes. For the third time he was assuring himself that this man's voice was surprisingly unlike that of other Southerners whom he had known. Also, it seemed to him that it had a strangely familiar ring.

Harmsgrave busied himself at carving a fowl.

"Yes," went on Marlsworth, giving his loose imagination play, "we have a great little State down there. You Northerners boast of your quick fortune-getting, but I fancy that we can make wealth rather rapidly, too, in Texas."

Marlsworth held out his plate to receive a succulent bit of duck's breast, but his voice ran on.

"Now, two years ago," he said, "I was a down and outer—not a cent to my name. Today——" he stopped as if to convey the impression of almost limitless worldly possessions. He was safe in this, for his letters of introduction had said nothing of the Simmons legacy.

"How did you make your pile, Mr. Hampden?" inquired Harmsgrave. His tone implied that he considered that Marlsworth had expected him to ask this question.

"Cattle, sir, cattle and potatoes," answered Marlsworth, spearing an olive. "First cattle and then potatoes. I might say that the potatoes grew out of the cattle."

Marlsworth laughed noisily at his own joke. He was feeling in fine fettle. Those two drinks procured on his way from the hotel had keenly edged his appetite, and the warmth and comfort of the club lapped him kindly. The fact that, with potatoes and cattle, he might be trusted only to distinguish between them, in no way marred his confidence or rosy outlook.

But as his guest's remarks ran on, Harmsgrave suddenly remembered of whose voice he was reminded by this man across the table.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed, leaning eagerly across the table. "Ever since I first heard you speak, Mr. Hampden, I've been trying to place that voice of yours. Now I've got it. If ever one man's voice resembled another's, yours is like that of Billy Marlsworth."

Marlsworth glanced up at his host keenly. Harmsgrave was not looking at his guest at that moment. His glance had wandered above the other's head.

"Very, very like Billy's voice," he was saying, and then: "Poor Billy Marlsworth! God rest his soul, if he had one"

Marlsworth winced. Somehow Harmsgrave's words and tone bit into him like the venomed point of a lancet.

Harmsgrave continued talking as he ate

"It's been twenty years," he said, "since he was drowned out there in the lake—twenty years—but how your voice makes him live again"

Marlsworth restrained himself with difficulty. "Tell me about it," he said, with an interest carefully curtailed to appear merely the interest in a promising story.

"When we get to the cigars," answered Harmsgrave. The two men ate in silence. Marlsworth did not enjoy his dinner so much as he had expected.

Finishing, the two men lit their weeds.

"Tell me about your friend," demanded Harmsgrave's guest. A feeling of surprise gripped him. Did old friends believe he was dead—he who had dropped so completely out of their lives that stormy November day twenty years before?

Marlsworth was not ready to disclose his identity. He wished first to make himself known to Cora. Then he certainly would have the laugh on Harmsgrave. The man from Texas eyed his host closely for a moment, but he read no suspicion in the other's bearing

"You interest me, sir," he said. "This Marlsworth—was he a friend of yours?"

Harmsgrave started. "Good God, man! I could have sworn almost that you were Marlsworth speaking." Then he remembered his guest's question of a moment before and answered: "He was—that is, he was as much my friend as a man of his caliber can be a man's friend."

Once, if not oftener, in the life of every man it is given to him to hear the naked truth about himself. Generally it cuts like a whiplash.

The man from Texas eyed the end of his cigar. His nerves had not twitched and jerked so since the time he recovered consciousness following that three weeks' siege which had ended the life of John Simmons and which had given him a close call.

Harmsgrave began again: "I said that he was as much a friend as a man of his sort can be. He was as weak as tepid water. Good enough fellow, you understand, but—just weak. You understand me, sir?"

Altho he was boiling inside, Marlsworth managed to nod.

"Let me think a moment," went on Harmsgrave. "Yes, it will be just twenty years ago next month since he

ACENTS WANTED

AGENTS
Get Next to This!

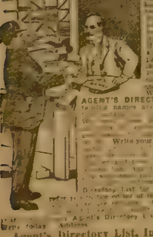
A Big Money Maker
A World Beater

The biggest, fastest, [illegible] shears in the world. A [illegible] Patented Tension Shears free with each sale. Hundreds of other big Snaps. [illegible] seeling easy. [illegible] clearing up to [illegible] $6 a day. Start while [illegible]. Outfit furnished free. Write today.
AMERICAN PRODUCTS CO., 7754 3rd St., CINCINNATI, O.

Sales Agent $1200 a Year Sure

We want one energetic representative in every [illegible] [illegible] the largest [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] Novelty Cutlery Co. [illegible] Bar St., Canton, O.

BIG MAIL FREE!



Would you like to [illegible] letters, [illegible]
AGENT'S DIRECTORY LIST containing names and addresses [illegible] Directory List to [illegible]
Write your name very plainly [illegible] not make a mistake [illegible] Agent's Directory List [illegible] Agent's Directory List [illegible]
Write today Address
Agent's Directory List, Indiana, Pa.

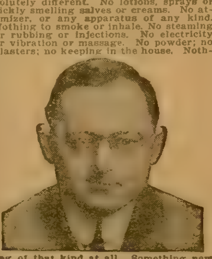
HOW I CURED MY CATARRH

TOLD IN A SIMPLE WAY

Without Apparatus, Inhalers, Salves, Lotions, Harmful Drugs, Smoke or Electricity.

Heals Day and Night

It is a new way. It is something absolutely different. No lotions, sprays or sickly smelling salves or creams. No atomizer, or any apparatus of any kind. Nothing to smoke or inhale. No steaming or rubbing or injections. No electricity or vibration or massage. No powder; no plasters; no keeping in the house. Nothing of that kind at all. Something new and different, something delightful and healthful, something instantly successful. You do not have to wait, and linger and pay out a lot of money. You can stop it over night—and I will gladly tell you how—FREE. I am not a doctor and this is not a so-called doctor's prescription—but I am cured and my friends are cured, and you can be cured. Your suffering will stop at once like magic.



I AM FREE—YOU CAN BE FREE

My catarrh was filthy and loathsome. It made me ill. It dulled my mind. It undermined my health and was weakening my will. The hawking, coughing, spitting made me obnoxious to all, and my foul breath and disgusting habits made even my loved ones avoid me secretly. My delight in life was dulled and my faculties impaired. I knew that in time it would bring me to an untimely grave, because every moment of the day and night it was slowly yet surely sapping my vitality.

But I found a cure, and I am ready to tell you about it FREE. Write me promptly.

RISK JUST ONE CENT

Send no money. Just your name and address on a postal card. Say: "Dear Sam Katz: Please tell me how you cured your catarrh and how I can cure mine." That's all you need to say. I will understand, and I will write to you with complete information, FREE, at once. Do not delay. Send postal card or write me a letter today. Don't think of turning this page until you have asked for this wonderful treatment that can do for you what it has done for me.

SAM KATZ, Room A. S. 385,
2909 Indiana Avenue Chicago, Ill.

lost his life out there in the old lake." The speaker made a sweeping gesture toward Lake Michigan.

Marlsworth forgot his anger in wondering why they had been so sure of his death. He had been something of a yachtsman, yes—but he remembered distinctly that he had not been near the lake for more than a week before the day on which he dropped out of his old life.

"Good Lord!" he pondered. "Did they think I was fool enough to put out into the lake with the wind blowing a blizzard?" Marlsworth was—yes, he was dumfounded. He kept his counsel.

Harmsgrave was silent for a minute or more. He seemed to be thinking together the threads of the past.

"Marlsworth," he said, "left his home in Hyde Park at eleven o'clock one Monday morning. He told his wife that he was going to work. He made pretense of being a stock broker, you know, but really, Mr. Hampden, he was never anything but a loafer. According to statements made by his wife, he had complained of feeling ill that morning. She said that he told her that he was suffering from a slight headache. She didn't say so, but we all knew what that meant. Morning headaches were old stories with Marlsworth—almost as old as late sprees. He didn't show up at his office.

"That night—or, rather, the following morning, I suppose it was really, but she said that night—when her husband did not come home, Mrs. Marlsworth became alarmed and notified her relatives. For weeks thereafter they dragnetted the city and State for him, calling in the assistance of the police, but careful always to let no breath of his absence reach the newspapers. It would be impossible to keep the newspapers in the dark about a thing like that now—but it happened twenty years ago, when the police had not yet learned the full value of blaring trumpets.

"They found but one clew," went on Harmsgrave. "They learned that his little thirty-foot sailing vessel was not at its usual mooring off the yacht club. However, none of the club attendants had seen Marlsworth take the boat out. But for that matter, they didn't remember seeing any one take it out, and the boat was gone."

For the first time in something over twenty years Marlsworth was thinking hard and in a straight line. "How the —— Well, Harmsgrave hadn't finished—maybe the light would come.

"Five weeks after his disappearance," said Harmsgrave, "his boat drifted ashore at Michigan City. It was pretty badly wrecked, but the name, 'Inde,' was still there. There was no mistaking the boat. It wasn't until a month later that they found his body. Of course, after that long time, they never could have identified it if they hadn't found his watch."

Harmsgrave ceased speaking for an interval and puffed at his cigar. Like a thunderbolt, the truth struck down thru Marlsworth's long fogged mind

"So the fool had really kept his promise! Why—why, I'd forgotten about that!"

The thoughts tumbled about in Marlsworth's head like tipsy marionettes. Then, vividly, an episode of that day twenty years before stood out in his mind. He had met the fellow several hours after leaving home, and after visits to more than one saloon. Marlsworth had got pretty thoroly drunk. He remembered that distinctly. Yes, and somehow he had gotten rid of all the money which had been in his pockets when he left the house. It came back to him that it had rather pleased his tipsy sense of humor that he was cutting loose from all ties without a penny in his pockets. From the latest saloon he had swung dizzily out on lower Wabash avenue, to run full into a whining, dirty-faced beggar—a boy of not more than 18 or thereabouts, a boy with hollow cheeks and gaunt eyes. The boy had pleaded for the price of a meal.

With an expression of owlish and drunken gravity on his face, Marlsworth had answered: "'S all right, old man—'nt gotta cent. Tell you what 'll do, tho; 'll give you m' watch if y'll go down t' th' yacht club, get in my boat, sail out inter th' lake an' take a bath. 'Ll y' do it? You need a bath, son—'d y' ever have one?"

"Yes, sir; I'll do it," the boy had answered.

"Swear you'll do it?"

"Yes, sir."

Marlsworth had given him the watch, after which, with drunken elaboration, he had directed the boy how he might get the boat. Then they had parted, Marlsworth to shake the dust of his native city from his feet and the hungry boy—so he had been fool enough to do it!

Marlsworth was not the man to appreciate the tragedy of a promise kept at all hazards. He had often laughed over the memory. Just now, however, the humor of the situation was not so keen to him.

Harmsgrave began speaking again

"Lord, the way that man's wife has worshiped his memory! And to think that he wasn't worth a tinker's damn! Never would have been! But that's the way with women. About eight months after Marlsworth went away the baby was born —"

Some one seemed to have hit Marlsworth on the back of the head. To his ears Harmsgrave's voice drained off into such a dull, droning sound as a bumblebee makes among heavy blossoms

"A baby—a baby? I didn't dream of—oh, what's the use! These things are to be expected!" Marlsworth thought, disjointedly

The electric lights seemed to run all together before his eyes. Harmsgrave's voice began to reach him again.

"And that boy believes that his father was a sort of composite King Arthur-Chevalier Bayard, cut down in the flower of his manhood. The wonderful part of it is that Billy is just that—the real thing. He's a member of this club, or the same thing, for he will be when he finishes college. Anyhow, he comes here whenever he likes. He's in his junior year, and took second honors last fall."

Marlsworth's mind was all in a heap.

The two men stood; they went out into the lounging-room. Harmsgrave offered his guest a fresh cigar, but the man from Texas refused it. He was afraid for the other to see how his hand shook. Somehow that intended dropping in on Cora tomorrow had lost some of its savor. He rather hoped that Harmsgrave was about to drop the Marlsworths as a topic for discussion.

Perhaps Harmsgrave would have done so, perhaps not. But as the two men seated themselves, there strode into the lounging-room a tall, well-knit youngster of 20 or thereabouts, tanned and clear of complexion and splendidly vibrant with healthful life.

"Speak of angels, and they appear, to paraphrase an old proverb," said the host to his companion. Then, as the young man threw himself in a chair across the room, Harmsgrave called: "Come over here, Billy Marlsworth!"

The young man got to his feet and started across the room toward them. Then, evidently having forgotten something, he turned and left the room, calling over his shoulder: "I'll be back in a moment, Mr. Harmsgrave. Forgot to call up the mater."

Harmsgrave turned to his guest. "Now and then, Mr. Hampden," he said, "I have wondered if Billy Marlsworth was really drowned. Of course, I don't think that there's much doubt of it, but then the thought has come to me. It may sound brutal to you, but I hope to God he is dead! Think, sir! Suppose he would turn up back here to show that boy what he really is. Wouldn't it be hell?"

Harmsgrave looked at the man from Texas as if expecting an answer. The man from Texas did not speak. He tried to, but he couldn't.

A moment later Billy Marlsworth came back.

"This is my friend, Mr. Hampden of Texas, Mr. Marlsworth."

Mr. Hampden of Texas, stood and grasped the outstretched hand of Billy Marlsworth. His throat felt dry and parched. He doubted if its usual wetting would satisfy it. Also, there was a queer feeling at the back of his head. But at the first touch of Billy—of his only begotten son's hand—something rioted in him and sent the blood rushing thru his veins. Yet, even at the moment when exhilaration possessed him, Harmsgrave's words of hardly a moment before came back to him and struck him like a blow in the face. A numbness fell upon him. He felt spent. He wanted to say good night and withdraw, but something chained him.

Marlsworth heard his son talking, but he could not distinguish what he said. One sentence stabbed his brain like a white-hot sword. It was: "Wouldn't it be hell if he came back?"

Twenty-five years were brushed away from Marlsworth. He seemed to look again in the face of the woman he loved. He seemed to dream again, as he had dreamed in the past, of a child—their child—a man-child!

The man's spirit writhed and twisted like a tortured thing.

"Wouldn't it be hell if he came back?"

Marlsworth glanced at his son's fresh, eager face. It was Cora's face, but—but it was his face, too—the color of the eyes was his! He snatched the crumb like a hungry dog. But it was brushed away almost instantly by the realization that the strength, the manliness, the cleanliness in Billy Marlsworth's face belonged to Cora Marlsworth, his mother, and to the boy himself. The man from Texas knew that he had no property rights here.

"Wouldn't it be hell if he came back?"

Marlsworth stole a swift glance at the boy. A great wave of love swept thru him. He wanted to leap to his feet, strike a hand down on the lad's shoulder and say:

"Billy, boy, you're my son! My son!"

The man's new-found love fought like a beast at bay behind the iron bars which he had built up around himself during those twenty wasted years. He knew that he could never keep up the bluff and change. It was too late—too late!

Harmsgrave stood up

"Well, Mr. Hampden," he said, "I'll leave you with Billy. See you again tomorrow, I suppose. Drop in on me at the office."

"Wouldn't it be hell if he came back?"

Marlsworth somehow got to his feet. "No, Mr. Harmsgrave," he said, "I'm leaving for Texas on the Southwestern Limited at midnight. Got a wire today calling me home."

The man from Texas held out his hand to Billy Marlsworth

"Good-by," he said

Harmsgrave and his guest got into their coats and hats and went out into wind-swept Michigan avenue. In the mind of the man from Texas one sentence kept repeating itself like a dirge

"Wouldn't it be hell if he came back?"

* * *

A YULETIDE CHOICE.

Tho lilies may be just as white as your brow,
I don't long for lilies this week, anyhow.
Tho just like your eyes, the stars may be bright,
The stars don't appeal to me, somehow, tonight
And the daffodil's gold may be much like your hair,
But for daffodils, dear, I don't seem to care;
And tho roses are sweet, like your lips, very red,
The roses tonight leave my heart cold and dead.
Ah, the reason for this is the flower I choose
Means a kiss on those lips of such rosy-red hues.
It is only a bit of a green and a white,
But it's mistletoe, love, and it's hanging tonight.

—Charles Harding Divine, in Judge

* * *

His Suggestion.

The son of a wealthy distiller in the north of Ireland upon his marriage was promoted by his father to the position of managing director, and was handed over one of the father's residences, known as Distillery House. Some months afterward the son, meeting a friend, said:

"We have been thinking of changing the name of our residence; it scarcely sounds well, my wife's letters to be addressed from Distillery House. Could you suggest a suitable name?"

The friend thought for a moment, and then said:

"I think I have hit upon it. What do you say to calling it Alcho Hall?"

CUT YOUR OWN HAIR

You can now cut your own hair when and how you please and as good as a barber can do it without the barber's bill if you use an

AMERICAN SAFETY HAIR CUTTER
McDonough's Patent

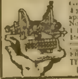
This automatic machine is not a clipper. Works like combing your hair, enabling you to cut your own hair quickly and cheaply. Is sanitary. The money you save on six 35c hair cuts pays for the machine. Future hair cuts cost only 2c each. The only attention required is occasional renewal of blades. Outfit complete with six blades $2.00 postpaid. If your dealer cannot supply you, send the money today or write for information. Dealers and salesmen write for terms

AMERICAN SAFETY HAIR CUTTER CO.,
967 Liberty Avenue, Room 226, Pittsburgh, Pa.

BLUE & WHITE CHECKED GINGHAM

Free [illegible] neat Blue & White Checked Gingham, very [illegible] thing for Aprons, Children's Dresses, [illegible] sent free for selling only 1-doz. 25c boxes of King's Catarrh Cream, splendid for Colds, Chaps, Catarrh, Headache, Sore Throat, etc. Sells fine. Send no money. Simply send your name & address & we will mail you 1-doz. boxes to sell. When sold, send us the money & the 12 yds. of Gingham is yours. If you cannot sell the Cream, you may return it to us. We will take all the risk.

King Mfg. Co. Dept. 107. St. Louis, Mo.



AMAZING BARGAIN!

Genuine Standard Visible Oliver Typewriter—latest Model 5, back spacer, tabulator, color writing. Nothing lacking—metal case. FREE TRIAL. No Advance Payment. [illegible] FREE Typewriter Book today. No obligation.

TYPEWRITERS DISTRIBUTING SYNDICATE
Dept. 5239, 1510 Wabash Avenue, Chicago

ASTHMA
INSTANT RELIEF
DR KINSMAN'S ASTHMA REMEDY 50¢
AT ALL DRUGGISTS

FIBRE LEGS ARMS

4-LB. FIBER LEGS – ON EASY TERMS
ORTHOPEDIC BRACES FOR ALL DEFORMITIES. Send for Booklet
RAY TRAUTMAN, 624 DEAN BUILDING, MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

Today $13.75—$1 Down

Tomorrow—Maybe—$18.75

Send Only $1

Our proposal is this: Send us only $1. No references required. Let us open with you a charge account, and send this watch on credit.

Wear it 30 days. If you are not satisfied then with your bargain, send it back and we will return your $1.

Don't send more than $1. Our object in this offer is to open new charge accounts. If you keep the Watch, send us $1 monthly. Take a whole year to pay.

Only 10,000 More

Each year we buy 10,000 of these wonderful Watches. They are made by the Illinois Watch Co., Springfield, Ill.—one of the oldest and greatest watch concerns in America. The best jewelers in the country feature this famous make.

We buy their 17-Jewel movement, guaranteed for 25 years. We buy it in a beautiful 20-year Gold-Filled case.

We offer this Watch at $13.75, but only 10,000 of them. Our object is to open up 10,000 new charge accounts, and make new lifetime friends. For we sell thousands of things here, including 5000 things for the home. And we know you will buy here many years when you once start an account.

Send Coupon Now

Let us urge you to send this coupon now. These 10,000 watches won't last long. And you would wait a year to get another bargain like this.

Send with the coupon only $1. Let us trust you for the rest. If you don't like your bargain, send it back to us. You don't risk anything.

If you are delighted, let it always remind you that you have an account here. And your credit is good for thousands of things you may want.

To avoid disappointment, send the coupon today. An offer like this doesn't come very often. Don't delay and miss it.

Spiegel,
May, Stern Co
3743 Wall Street, Chicago

Our Price $13.75

Only $1 Down

A Whole Year to Pay

This watch has a 17-jeweled movement—it is a perfect timekeeper. The price seems impossible. But we guarantee this watch to have 17 fine jewels, and to be a genuine Illinois watch, exactly the same as sold in jewelry stores.

The case is a 20-Year Gold-Filled Case. That is, it is warranted for 20 years. It is open-face and a beauty. The back is handsomely engraved. It has a screw back and bezel, so it is positively dust proof.

The watch is guaranteed for 25 years. We send with this watch this guarantee certificate. Think of that—only $13.75 for almost a lifetime of perfect watch service. The watch is a perfect timekeeper. No better timekeepers were ever made than the 17-jeweled Illinois. Every man who knows watches knows this.

If you want to sell this watch back to us, after 30 days' use, we will return every cent that you pay on it.

SPIEGEL, MAY, STERN CO. [illegible]
3743 Wall Street, Chicago

I enclose first payment of $1 for which send, express paid, the 17-jewel Illinois Watch No K6F 743 described in your advertisement. If I keep it I will pay $1 each month until $13.75 has been paid. If I return it within the 30 day trial period you are to send me back my $1.

Name..

Postoffice ....

St. or Box No. ....State ......

JEWELRY CATALOG FREE. It contains everything that is new in watches, diamonds and jewelry—all sold on our easy credit plan. Just drop us a postal and it will be mailed you free. But don't fail to use the coupon and send us $1, as this wonderful watch offer will not be made again for a year.

Santa's Secret.

(Continued From Page 5.)

the idea of you good-naturedly and smile discreetly when you are mentioned. Why, most of the chimney pieces were decorated before I came. Think of it! And they caricature you in the street by imitating your makeup! Dear, dear! You are only a huge joke. I hate to see a man making a fool of himself, but I suppose you will go on doing it as long as you live. And now I must go in and get a bite to eat."

She disappeared thru the tessellated igloo and for a long time Santa Claus sat watching the Northern Lights playing hide-and-seek on the distant horizon. His pet polar bear, in a fit of some subtle, innate animal sympathy, came up and rubbed his nose against the old man's stomach—that famous stomach—the herald of all the ages.

Then Santa Claus, bracing up stolidly and throwing out his chest, the old twinkle resumed, for you can't keep a good Santa Claus down for long, said to the bear:

"So the old lady thinks I am deceived! Well, I am—by nine-tenths of them. But here and there in the vast crowd is a rare soul who still keeps faith with me, who knows that if there is any reality at all I am, who understands me, enters into my spirit and whom I would not disappoint for worlds. That is my recompense for being such a joke to all the rest of them. And she—and she—she will never know—being a woman!"—Life.

Classified Want Ads

Classified Want Ad Information

The rate for one insertion in Chicago Ledger and one insertion in The Saturday Blade is 30 cents a word, minimum 14 words, less 3% for cash. Each initial and group of figures is counted as a word, and the name and address are also counted. This is the minimum rate; neither more nor less is charged, irrespective of size of ad or number of insertions. An ad may appear in both publications of the same week, or in the Blade of one week and the Ledger of the next

W. D. BOYCE CO., Publisher, 500 N. Dearborn St. CHICAGO, ILL.

SALESMEN WANTED

TRAVELING SALESMEN WANTED—EXPERIENCE unnecessary. Earn big pay while you learn at home during spare time. Only eight weeks required. Hundreds of good positions open. Write today for large list of openings and testimonials from hundreds of students we have placed in positions paying $100 to $500 per month. Address nearest office. Dept. B-37, National Salesmen Training Ass'n, Chicago, New York San Francisco.

AGENTS WANTED

EVERY HOME ON FARM, IN SMALL TOWN or suburb needs and will buy the wonderful Aladdin kerosene (coal-oil) mantle lamp; five times as bright as electric, tested and recommended by Government and 34 leading universities; awarded gold medal; one farmer cleared over $500 in 6 weeks; hundreds with rigs or autos earning $100 to $300 per month; no capital required; we furnish goods on time to reliable men; write quick for distributor's proposition, and lamp for free trial. Mantle Lamp Co., 607 Aladdin Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

$30.00 EVERY WEEK EASY AS MY PERsonal representative. 100% profit, selling my household necessity. Every farm, every home, office, shop, store buys over and over again. You build high-grade, straightforward, clean-cut business. No scheme, no premiums. Live, honest men and women, I want you. Get quick action; write me today. W. D. Kibler, Pres. W. D. Kibler Company, Dept. W-1, In[illegible] Indiana.

WOULD $150 MONTHLY, AUTO OF YOUR own to travel in, as General Agent, handling remarkable sellers. Lightning Patch Vulcanizer, Shock Absorber, and Anti-Thief Combination Auto-Switch Lock, thief proof, interest you? Then address Dept. H151, U. S. Manufacturing Co., Wolcott, Indiana.

AGENTS—100 TO 300% PROFIT SELLING Duo Toilet Articles, Perfumes, Spices, Soaps, Family Medicines and Specialties. Big Every-day Sellers. Exclusive territory. Outfit Free. All or spare time. Big chance. Full instructions. Write quick. Duo Factories, Dept. C. 56, North Java, N. Y.

WE START YOU IN BUSINESS, FURNISHing everything; men and women, $30.00 to $200.00 weekly operating our "New System Specialty Candy Factories," home anywhere. Opportunity lifetime; booklet free. Z Ragsdale Co., East Orange, N. J.

AGENTS—SELL RICH-LOOKING IMPORTED 36x68 rugs. $1 each. Carter, Tenn., sold 114 in 4 days. Profit $57. You can do same. Write for sample offer selling plan; exclusive territory. Sample rug by parcel post prepaid, 98c. Condon, Importer, Stonington, Maine.

AGENTS WANTED—TO ADVERTISE OUR goods by distributing free sample to consumer. 90 cents an hour. Write for full particulars. Thomas Mfg. Co., 511 North St., Dayton, Ohio.

PORTRAIT AGENTS SEND FOR OUR large catalog. 16x20 frames 14c up. Portraits at 35c. Samples free. Credit given. Address Friedman Mfg. Co., Box 120, Martinsburg, Mo.

AGENTS—500% PROFIT; GOLD AND SILver sign letters for store and office windows. Any one can put on. Write today for free sample. Metallic Letter Co., 416 N. Clark, Chicago.

AGENTS—COOPER MADE $314 LAST month, $91 last week selling "Kantleak" Raincoats. New proposition. We deliver and collect. Sample coat Free. Comer Mfg. Co., 7 Card St., Dayton, Ohio.

AGENTS! STARTLING, NOVEL, MYSTERIous are our wonderful luminous Crucifixes, Clocks and Pictures. World-wide sales, unusual profits. Striker Company, 159 East Ohio St., Chicago.

AGENTS—I'VE A NEW SOAP GAME that's a dandy. New stuff. 100% profits. Sample and full layout free. Write quick. Lacassian Co., Dept. 21, St. Louis, Mo.

AGENTS—SELL RELIABLE CUSTOM MADE raincoats. Big commission. Complete sample line free. Temple Raincoat Co., Box 61, Templeton, Mass.

WE PAY $36 A WEEK AND EXPENSES TO men with rigs to introduce poultry compound. Year's contract. Imperial Mfg. Co., Dept. 67, Parsons, Kans.

AGENTS—TO SELL SHIRTS DIRECT TO consumers; paying proposition. Nizneim Shirt Co., 4050 3d Ave., New York City.

REMNANT STORE, CINCINNATI, OHIO. Greatest dry goods bargains on earth. Agents and store keepers supplied.

MEN—100% PROFIT GUARANTEED, SELLing Spray Pump and Automobile Washer. Write Rusler Company, Johnstown, Ohio.

$10 PER 1,000 ALLOWED DISTRIBUTING free soap samples. Pocket Soap Co., Lebanon, N. H.

HELP WANTED

MAKE MONEY! MEN, WOMEN, BOYS, girls. Sell Triple Witch Corn Leaf. Costs $1.00 dozen, sells $1.80. Easily sell 3 dozen d[illegible] guarantee. Send 10c for [illegible] American Chem. [illegible]

$10 WEEKLY, REPORTING NAMES, INformation. All or spare time. Men, women. Capital unnecessary. No canvassing. Be our representative. National Information Exchange, 305 Bromley Bldg., Omaha, Neb.

THOUSANDS GOVERNMENT JOBS OPEN to Men Women. $75.00 month. Steady work. [illegible] common education sufficient. Write immediately for free list of positions now obtainable. Franklin Institute Dep't. S 30, Rochester, N. Y.

EVERY READER OF THE LEDGER OUGHT to read these ads. Every week splendid chances to make money—to better yourself—to buy, sell or exchange goods or services are offered here.

HELP WANTED—(Continued)

MAN OR WOMAN TO TRAVEL FOR OLD-established firm. No canvassing; $1,170 first year, payable weekly, pursuant to contract; expenses advanced. G. K. Nichols, Phila., Pa., Pepper Bldg.

OVER $2 DAILY EASILY EARNED KNITting at home. Auto-Knitters furnished on time. Send 2c stamp. Dept. 78, Auto Knitter Co., 147 Franklin St., Buffalo, N. Y.

BECOME CHAUFFEURS, $25 WEEK. LEARN while earning. Sample lessons Free. Franklin Institute, Dep't. S 810, Rochester, N. Y.

WISH TO HEAR AT ONCE FROM RELIAble single man capable of managing large ranch successfully. Address W-W. Ranch 314, Farmingdale, So. Dak.

$25 WEEKLY COLLECTING NAMES AND addresses. Send stamp. Superba Co., W52, Baltimore, Md.

MEN, WOMEN, BOYS, GIRLS, EARN FIFTY cents per hour, spare time. Von Dorster, Catawissa, Penn'a.

WE PAY 25c EACH FOR FARMERS' names. Send dime for contract. Sun, Leroy, Mich.

MALE HELP WANTED

A SURE JOB FOR YOU WITH BIG PAY and steady work. Thousands of government positions open this year. Write for big Free Book D. V. 1034 which tells how to get one.—Earl Hopkins, Washington, D. C.

NO STRIKE: 8 HOUR DAY. MEN EVERYwhere. Firemen, Brakemen, Baggagemen, $120. Colored Porters. Experience unnecessary. 686 Railway Bureau, E. St. Louis, Ill.

BE AN AUTOMOBILE EXPERT IN SIX weeks. Our big book tells you how. Automobile Training School, 1062 Locust St., Kansas City, Mo.

BE A DETECTIVE. EARN FROM $150.00 to $300.00 per month; travel over the world. Write C. T. Ludwig, 320 Westover Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

GOVERNMENT EXAMINATIONS — THORough instruction, $5. Returned if not appointed. Particulars free. American Civil Service School, Washington, D. C.

WANTED RAILWAY MAIL CLERKS. $75.00 month. Sample examination questions free. Franklin Institute, Dep't. S 28, Rochester, N. Y.

FIREMEN, BRAKEMEN, ALL RAILROADS, beginners $120 monthly. Railway Association, Monroe, Brooklyn, N. Y.

SILVER MIRRORS, PLATING TABLEware, auto-brass. Home plans free. Clarence Sprinkle, Dept. 2, Marion, Ind.

FEMALE HELP WANTED

WILL PAY RELIABLE WOMAN $25.00 TO distribute Free (not to sell) 200 pkgs. Borax Soap Powder among friends. No money required. B. W. Ward Company, 732 N. Franklin St., Chicago.

FIVE BRIGHT, CAPABLE LADIES TO travel, demonstrate and sell dealers. $25 to $50 per week. Railroad fare paid. Goodrich Drug Company, Dept. 85, Omaha, Neb.

PATENTS

PATENTS SECURED OR FEE RETURNED. Actual search and patentability report free. Send sketches and description, or model, of your invention. My patent sales service gets full value. 1916 Edition ninety-page patent book free. George P. Kimmel, 260 Barrister Building, Washington, D. C.

WANTED, AN IDEA! WHO CAN THINK of some simple thing to patent? Protect your ideas, they may bring you wealth. Write for "Needed Inventions," "Patent Buyers," and "How to Get Your Patent and Your Money." Randolph & Co., Patent Attorneys, Dept. 174, Washington, D. C.

MONEY IN PATENTS. PATENTS SEcured or fees returned. Booklets, free. Send sketch for free search. P. H. Pattison & Company, U. S. Patent Attorneys, 425 Barrister Bldg., Washington, D. C.

PROTECTIVE PATENTS PROCURED promptly, 104 pg. Blue Book free. Trade marks registered. Robb & Robb, 248-252 Southern Building, Washington, D. C.

THE PATENTOME IS FREE. AN EDUCAtion in obtaining patents. Established 1865. Anderson & Son, Attorneys, 712 7th St., Washington, D. C.

NAMES

I WILL PAY $1.00 EACH FOR NAMES AND address of certain people. Particulars free. B. H. Spaulding, Los Angeles, California.

PLAYER PIANO OWNERS

INVESTIGATE OUR SPECIAL MUSIC ROLL offer. International Music Company, 1579 Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, Ill.

REAL ESTATE

A SMALL FARM IN CALIFORNIA WILL make you more money with less work. You will live longer and better. Delightful climate. Rich soil. Hospitable neighbors. Good roads, schools and churches. Write for our San Joaquin Valley illustrated folders free. C. L. Seagraves, Industrial Commissioner, AT&SF Ry., 1931 Ry. Exch., Chicago.

FARMS WANTED

WANTED, INFORMATION REGARDING good farm for sale. Northwestern Business Agency, Minneapolis, Minn.

FARMS WANTED— HAVE 7,000 BUYERS; describe your unsold property. 504 Farmers Exchange, Denver, Colo.

FARM LANDS

PROSPERITY IN CANADA—THOUSANDS of farmers in Western Canada have sold their crops this year for more than the total cost of their land. Land at $15 to $30 an acre has produced crops worth $40 to $75 an acre. Stock raising and dairying are equally profitable—hogs and beef highest in country's history. Irrigation districts producing more alfalfa and fodder crops than ever before. Get your farm home from the Canadian Pacific Railway. Last year I asked you to take advantage of this opportunity—you might have paid for your farm with the 1916 crop—again I extend the invitation. Good land from $11 to $30 per acre; irrigated land from $35; 20 years to pay; government guarantees land and water titles. Pay in full at any time if desired. We will lend you up to $2,000 in improvements in certain districts, with no security other than the land. Ready-made farms sold on special easy terms. Loan for live stock after one year's occupation, subject to certain reasonable conditions explained on request. Low taxes; no taxes on improvements. Free schools; full religious liberty; good climate, and the best neighbors in the world. Other farmers becoming rich in Western Canada; you have the same opportunity. Buy direct from the Canadian Pacific Railway. Write for free book and full information. J. S. Dennis, Assistant to the President, Canadian Pacific Railway, 94 Ninth Avenue, Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

FARM LANDS FOR SALE

PROFITABLE LITTLE FARMS IN VALLEY of Virginia, 5 and 10 acre tracts $250 and up. Good fruit and farming country. Send for literature now. F. H. LaBaume, Agr. Agt., N. & W. Ry., 248 Arcade Bldg., Roanoke, Va.

MISSOURI LAND

SMALL MISSOURI FARM. $10 CASH AND $5 monthly; no interest or taxes; highly productive land; close to 3 big markets; write for photographs and full information. Munger, C-107, N. Y. Life Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

OIL LAND INVESTMENTS

FORTUNES ARE BEING MADE IN THE Oil Fields. Oil Land sold on easy payments. You can start with $1.00. Particulars Free. Write today. Address, Frank P. Cleveland, 1124 Adams Express Building, Chicago.

FOR TRADE

SACRIFICE! WELL PAYING BIRD STORE on Chicago's main street. Worth $3,000.00. Trade for small farm. Breeder, 4938 State St.

MOVING PICTURE BUSINESS

$35.00 PROFIT NIGHTLY. SMALL CAPITAL starts you. No experience needed. Our machines are used and endorsed by Government institutions. Catalog Free. Atlas Moving Picture Co., Franklin Bldg., Chicago.

$50.00—NIGHTLY—START IN THE MOVing picture business, on our installment plan. No experience necessary. Catalog free. Monarch Film Service, 228 Union Ave., Dept. C, Memphis, Tenn.

MOTION PICTURE PLAYS

SEND US YOUR IDEAS FOR PHOTOPLAYS, Stories, etc. We accept them in any form —correct free—sell on commission. Big rewards! Make money. Get details now. Writer's Selling Service, 10 Main, Auburn, N. Y.

WRITE FOR FREE CATALOG OF BEST books on writing and selling photoplays, short stories, poems. Atlas Publishing Co., 844, Cincinnati.

POULTRY

INVINCIBLE, GAME FIGHTING FOWLS, brilliant plumage, graceful movements, gamey meat. Wonderful layers. Illustrated circular free. Alfred Graham, Murphy, N. C.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

INVESTORS MAGAZINE FREE TO YOU. $10 invested with us has made others $300 in few months. Our magazine, Hoffman's Investment Journal, tells how this was done. This magazine gives facts about the real earning power of money. Tells how many have started on the road to fortune. To introduce it we will send three months free. If you want to make money, write today saying, "Send your magazine." Hoffman Trust Company, 339 Kress Building, Houston, Texas.

$20 BUYS DEED TO LAND, ALSO INTERest in oil wells that should pay you $100 for every dollar invested; payments $1 monthly; complete information free. Address Texas-Gulf Co., 1105 Union Bank, Houston, Texas.

OLD COINS WANTED

$2 TO $500 EACH PAID FOR HUNDREDS of Coins. Keep all money dated before 1895 and send ten cents for new illustrated Coin Value Book, size 4x7. It may mean your fortune. Get posted. Clarke Coin Company, Box 70, Le Roy, N. Y.

SONG POEMS

SONG WRITERS' "KEY TO SUCCESS" free! We compose and facilitate free publication or sale. Submit poems. Knickerbocker Studios, 113 Gaiety Bldg., New York.

PERSONAL

SUFFERERS FROM NERVOUS, WEAK, run down conditions should take Juven Pills. They accomplish marvelous results. This medicine has more rejuvenating, vitalizing force than has ever before been offered. Sent postpaid only on receipt of this advertisement and $1, by C. I. Hood Co., proprietors Hood's Sarsaparilla, Lowell, Mass. (Z.R.)

GET MARRIED QUICK. BEFORE YOU ARE too old. "Paradox," 21 years old, offers big selection of ladies and gentlemen, many wealthy and handsome. Improve yourself by corresponding with opposite sex, all parts of world. Biggest, best, cleanest, oldest correspondence paper. Free copy. "Paradox," Dept. 87, Berwyn, Ill.

WHY BE LONESOME? FIND YOUR AFfinity and be happy. Let me help you with a sane modern method. No publicity. Strictly confidential. All first class mail. Quick results assured. Either sex. Send full description and thirty cents for large list of names and addresses. Address W. E. Hammond, 122 West First St., Marion, Ind.

PERSONAL—WANTED QUICK—NAME AND address of reliable single man who would marry wealthy lady who could assist him financially. Enough said. If interested, write quick for more particulars. Address Allen Ward (B 520), Valley, Nebr.

WEAK, NERVOUS, RUN DOWN MEN; REmember we cure chronic, nervous, blood, kidney, bladder and private diseases. Book, symptom blank and advice free, sealed. Dr. Meyers, 316 Nicollet Ave., Minneapolis, Minn.

WOMEN — FREE CATALOGUE SENT. Hundreds toilet and sanitary articles, personal and family use; our specialty rubber gloves. L. T. Kinney & Co., 58 East Randolph St., Chicago.

ACNE—FACIAL ERUPTIONS, RED NOSE; the cause removed; marks, scars, discolorations eradicated; natural skin restored. Book for stamp. Dr. Rodgers, 36 W. Randolph St., Chicago.

MARRY RICH. BE HAPPY AND PROSPERous. Big list of descriptions and photos of congenial people with means free. Sealed, confidential. Either sex. Standard Club, Box 607, Grayslake, Ill.

FREE COUPON WITH 88-PIECE CHRISTmas Packages—Cards, tags, seals, stickers, 10c. 3 for 25c. Premium Package Co., 30 Henry St., Battle Creek, Mich.

MARRIAGE PAPER COMPLETE WITH photos, descriptions, names and addresses, 3 months for 25c. Wren, 44 Grand Rapids, Mich.

MARRY—FREE PHOTOS. BEAUTIFUL ladies; descriptions and directory; pay when married. New Plan Co., Dept. 21, Kansas City, Mo.

MARRY—MARRIAGE DIRECTORY WITH photos and description free. Pay when married. The Exchange, Dept. 28, Kansas City, Mo

REAL PHOTOS, ARTISTS' MODELS, BATHing girls, etc. Silver dime brings sample and catalog. B. W. Shaw, 44 Boylston St., Boston.

RELIANCE CORRESPONDENCE CLUB—INtroductions by mail, persons desiring marriage. Confidential. Information free. Box 376, Los Angeles, California.

MARRIAGE PAPER WITH NAMES, ADdresses, photos and descriptions. 25c. Box 2265 B, Boston, Mass.

GET ACQUAINTED. POSTCARDS FROM many countries. Membership and 6 pretty cards, 10c. The Riverside Club Knoxville, Md.

MARRIAGE PAPER—HIGHEST CHARACter; 20th year; sealed 10c. B. W. Love, Box 1616, Denver, Colo.

GET MARRIED—BEST MATRIMONIAL paper published. Mailed Free. The Correspondent, Toledo, Ohio.

MARRY RICH. HUNDREDS ANXIOUS TO marry. Descriptions and photos free. E. Unity, Grand Rapids, Mich.

GET MARRIED; LARGE, HANDSOMELY illustrated matrimonial magazine mailed free. H. Jahn, St. Paul, Minn.

CORRESPOND: MARRY—DESCRIPTIONS and addresses sealed 12c. Henry Mallon, 2250 N. Kostner ave., Chicago.

NAMES, ADDRESSES, DESCRIPTIONS OF girls anxious to marry. Dime and stamp. Box 555, Yates Center, Kansas.

Chicago Ledger

Entered as second-class matter June 25, 1885, at the postoffice at Chicago, Illinois, under act of March 3, 1879.

Published Every Saturday

By W. D. BOYCE CO., CHICAGO, ILL.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

Single subscriptions to the Chicago Ledger by mail $1.00 a year, 50 cents for six months, in advance. Remittances should be made by Bank Draft, Registered Letter, Postoffice or Express Money Order, payable to the Chicago Ledger. The address tab on your paper shows the date to which your subscription is paid.

BACK NUMBERS.

Back numbers of the Ledger promptly mailed. Always give the dates desired, plainly written, accompanied by your full address. Price 5 cents per copy.

ADVERTISING RATES.

For Display, $2.50 each Agate Line; for Classified, 30 cents a word, per insertion for circulation of the Chicago Ledger and The Saturday Blade combined. These two weeklies have an average circulation of

5,000,000

READERS WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS

Will somebody kindly page Santa Claus?

The biggest fish are caught with hook and lyin'.

Family jars are never used in preserving peace.

Never judge women and cigars by their wrappers.

Some of the most eloquent sermons are wordless.

Chronic complaining doesn't make a hard lot softer.

It's sometimes easier to step into another man's shoes than it is to walk in them.

Happy is the Christmas shopper who today finds that he has kept nothing but his temper!

People who travel on the downward path seldom provide themselves with a return ticket.

A clock keeps right on working when it goes on a strike; thus it gets the bulge on a man.

Not all floorwalkers are to be found in department stores, as any young father can inform you.

An elaborate tombstone and a contested will make the only notoriety wealth brings to some men.

Every man intends to have his own way after marriage, but his wife is likely to overrule his intentions.

Blessed is the man who expects handkerchiefs for a Christmas present, for he isn't likely to be disappointed.

A girl keeps her relatives in the background during courtship, but they always come to the front after marriage.

What a noiseless world this would be if women were as quiet all the time as they are when it comes to telling their age.

The trouble with some men is that they seem to think they are entitled to a month's vacation every time they work an hour.

And the man who goes thru life kicking like a mule nearly always lacks the force which renders that animal's kick effective.

Every time a man trades horses he expects to get the best of it—yet he knows the chances are about 100 to 1 against him.

If a man could live to be 200 or 300 years old he might have sense enough to leave off cotton whiskers when he played Santa Claus.

Even with his remarkable memory the oldest inhabitant fails to recall that he has inflicted his reminiscences on everybody he knows

Nothing succeeds like the success of the girl who knows just what she wants for Christmas and hands the right young man a gentle hint.

Home and Health

THE CHRISTMAS PUDDING.

Let misers boast their hoarded gold,
  And put their treasures by.
Not all the coin that e'er was told
  Is half so rich as I.

For me the nations all combine
  Their choicest gifts to send;
Jar-raisins, currants, eggs and wine,
  All in my service blend.

The homely suet not at all
  The knife of chopper dreads,
But lets them cut it into small
  Bits, particles, or shreds.

The raisin and the currant both
  With fellow-feeling view it,
A pound of each is nothing loth
  To join a pound of suet

The loaf to my assistance comes,
  Tho in proportion mean,
Yielding four ounces of its crumbs
  To all the rest's sixteen.

The western Indies don't refuse
  Their most appropriate boons,
But with their sugar aid my views,
  Giving two tablespoons.

The nutmeg, lemon-peel and mace,
  Each its proportion brings;
For every one I find a place,
  With fifty other things.

The modest ginger, all too shy
  Boldly to make advance,
Sends a mere teaspoon just to try
  My flavor to enhance.

The generous fowls, with eager haste,
  Their tender eggs bestow,
To firmly bind the luscious paste,
  And ev'ry cook must know.

With such ingredients, rich and rare—
  Matters 'twere vain to mince—
With me no other can compare;
  Of puddings I'm the prince.

—Punch.

❧

CHRISTMAS CANDY RECIPES.

CHERRY PUFFS—Wash a half-pint of large, solid cranberries and drop them in a thick sirup, boiling them till they become firm and candied. You can use candied cherries if you like, but they are more expensive. Mix the cherries with a half-pint of chopped nut meats, and then shape the mixtures into little balls between fingers well greased with butter. Then dip them in melted sweet chocolate, roll in powdered sugar and set away for a few hours in a cold place.

PEANUT KISSES—Shell a half-pint of peanuts, removing the brown hulls, and chop rather fine. Beat the whites of four eggs to a stiff froth, but not dry, add carefully two cups of granulated sugar, stir in the nuts and drop by teaspoon on oiled paper. Bake in a moderate oven till a delicate brown.

MAPLE PUFFS—One-half pound maple sugar, one-half pound brown sugar, whites of two eggs, one cup English walnuts, one-half cup chopped figs, one-half cup chopped citron, one-half cup raisins, one-half cup water. Boil the sugar and water till they spin a heavy thread. Beat the whites of the eggs very stiff, add gradually the hot sirup to them, beating all the time. When the mixture begins to stiffen, add the other ingredients and beat until it will hold its shape. Place by tablespoonfuls on greased paper and let stand till stiff.

COFFEE FUDGE—Boil together two cups of granulated sugar and one cup of strong coffee, with one tablespoonful of butter or of rich cream and a speck of salt. Boil till it forms a thread. Remove from the fire and beat till it is smooth and creamy. Pour into a buttered pan and mark into squares when partly cool.

HONEY POPCORN BALLS—Take a cup of strained honey, put it into a saucepan and boil until it will form a soft ball when dropped into cold water Have ready a good-sized bowl of freshly popped corn. Pour the honey over it, mixing all the time. When it cools a little, grease the hands, mold the corn into balls and stand them on greased paper. If it isn't convenient to get honey use a half-cup of water and a cup of sugar for the sirup.

■

IN DAYS OF YORE.

It is a beautiful arrangement, also, derived from the days of yore, that this festival, which commemorates the announcement of the religion of peace and love, has been made the season for gathering together of family connections and drawing closer again those bands of kindred hearts which the cares and pleasures and sorrows of the world are continually operating to cast loose; of calling back the children of a family who have launched forth in life and wandered widely asunder, once more to assemble about the paternal hearth, that rallying place of the affections, there to grow young and loving again.—Washington Irving.

FOR THE HOUSEWIFE.

Place crumpled tissue paper in the bottom of the jar and your cookies will keep fresh and crisp.

Oysters steamed in butter and put on toast make a delicious and handy dish for Sunday evening supper

If eggs are plenty, make them into a dinner dish and save the meat bill. Beau regard of eggs, for instance, is delicious and filling.

To soften butter, fill a bowl with boiling water until it is thoroly heated, then pour out the water and place the bowl over the butter. Let it stand for about ten minutes and you will find your butter soft, but not oily

❧

HEALTH NOTES.

Figs split open form excellent poultices for boils and small abscesses

A basin of water placed close to the bed is a great relief for insomnia. It is also a great germ catcher and purifier A few drops of perfume may be added.

Exercising should be avoided immediately after eating, and eating should be avoided immediately after exercising. Nature should be given a chance to rest and recuperate in either case before fresh work is heaped upon her. Early morning, immediately after rising and late in the evening before retiring, are the best times for calisthenics.

❧

BEAUTY HINTS.

When the hands get grimy and black with the dust and dirt of a strenuous day, do not try to remove it with soap and water alone. Rub some good cold cream all over them and let it remain about ten minutes, to loosen the dirt Then fill a bowl with warm water and scrub them with a good firm brush and pure castile soap.

To keep the eyebrows in a good condition use an eyebrow brush to smooth them down. A very small portion of olive oil to which a drop of perfume has been added may be used sparingly, smoothing the eyebrow away from the nose when applying it. Use tweezers to remove an occasional too long hair, or if it grows over the root of the nose.

THIS HANDSOME WALL CLOCK FREE

A few hours' work among your neighbor and friends will sell 12 boxes of Crescent Euca Balm at 25c a box. You collect and return to us $3.00 and the clock is yours. We trust you. Other valuable premiums just as easily earned. Write at once.

CRESCENT MFG. CO.
Dept. 1 Coudersport, Pa.

Relief to Ruptured People

Are you [illegible] a truss [illegible] people must wear some [illegible] support. Our New Sponge Rubber Pad [illegible] cannot slip [illegible] itself to ruptured parts with less pressure [illegible] long lived. Massages and strengthens [illegible] allows blood circulation and produces many cures.

New Scrotal Pad Needs No Leg Strap

Our new scrotal pad (pat'd) holds 8 out of 10 cases of hernia perfectly without strap between legs.

Free Sample Pads. A Sample Akron Sponge Rubber Truss Pad (pat'd) will be sent absolutely FREE upon request, also booklet "Relief to Truss Users." It's full of helps. Ask your dealer, or write us

THE AKRON TRUSS CO. DEPT. 32 AKRON, OHIO

MAKE YOUR BIKE A MOTORCYCLE

at a small cost by using our Attachable outfit. FITS ANY BICYCLE. Easily attached. No special tools required. Write today for bargain list and free book FREE BOOK describing the SHAW Bicycle Motor Attachment. Motorcycles, all makes, new and second-hand, $35 and up.

SHAW MANUFACTURING CO.
Dept. 5 Galesburg, Kansas.

LADIES I will gladly send you full information how to develop your Bust six inches, fill out hollow places, and gain splendid bodily vigor and a fine complexion. Results guaranteed. Write for my new book on *Womanly Beauty*. It is finely illustrated. Sent Free.

JENNIE L. COOK CO.,
551 LAKE ST., CHICAGO.

PARKER'S HAIR BALSAM

A toilet preparation of merit. Helps to eradicate dandruff. For Restoring Color and Beauty to Gray and Faded Hair. 50c. and $1.00 at druggists.

C. S. A. MONEY Write for price list today. WARREN SMITH, OTTAWA, ILL.

FREE A BEAUTIFUL SET OF DISHES (42 PIECES OF ART CHINA) WORTH $10 TO EACH READER OF THIS ADVERTISEMENT

Kibler's All'Round Oil —With a Thousand Uses is the finest and [illegible] to sell, cleaning, polishing and lubricating oil ever made. We want to put a bottle in every home, shop and office. *It cleans, polishes, lubricates and preserves.* Every one to whom we have given these dishes is delighted. There are forty-two beautiful pieces with delicate pink and green colorings true to Nature. Distinctively handsome and exclusive as an heirloom. Every piece edged in gold. Each piece, except the cups and saucers, will be decorated with your own initial in gold and the emblem of any fraternity you name. K. of P., Masons, Odd Fellows, Woodmen of the World, Woodmen's Circle, Modern Woodmen, Royal Neighbors, Eagles, Moose, Yeoman, Maccabees, Lady Maccabees, Knights and Ladies of Security, Modern Brotherhood, Ben Hur, Court of Honor, Knights of Columbus, Ancient Order of Hibernians, Women's Catholic Order of Foresters, Daughters of Isabella, Order of Martha, etc., etc.

How we can afford to do what we do

DEMAND will put Kibler's All'Round Oil in every grocery, drug, hardware, department and general store. Our great introductory plan is creating [illegible] demand. Our plan [illegible] it possible for everybody to get Kibler's Oil quickly, and we are placing in homes everywhere these beautiful dishes, worth more than the money we get for the oil.

Act Quickly. Secure Your Set of Dishes Now

This great opportunity is now open to you. Kibler's wonderful oil sells itself *[illegible] a possible purchaser.* Anybody—boy, girl, woman or man can dispose of two dozen bottles in less than that many hours by our easy plan.

The Oil is Easy to Sell

It acts like magic and gives a perfect polish to the finest furniture, floors, woodwork and all varnished surfaces. Try it on your piano, organ, [illegible] As a [illegible] typewriters, [illegible] clocks, guns, and everything needing lubrication. [illegible] dressing for leather or harness. A drop [illegible] razor strop helps put [illegible] Rust won't stay where [illegible] be in every home [illegible] kitchen utensils and [illegible] is made absolutely dustless when you use Kibler's All 'Round Oil.

An Easy Plan to Understand

We want to pay you for helping us by sending you *absolutely free* a magnificent set of Wild Rose Art China Dishes. We will send you [illegible] to us, and we will immediately [illegible] you the beautiful $10.00 set of Art China Dishes. That is all there is to it. We send extra bottles of oil to pay express charges, and guarantee the dishes to reach you without breakage.

Art Masterpieces—Extra Premiums—We have secured art prints, masterpieces in color of famous paintings. We send you 24 of these [illegible] *free premiums,* to [illegible] This [illegible] will be mailed post paid to any address at 25c per bottle. Ask your dealer for it.

FILL IN COUPON and MAIL TO US

W. D. KIBLER COMPANY, Dept. 519 Indianapolis, Indiana

Ship me at once two dozen bottles of Kibler's All 'Round Oil and 24 beautiful art prints; you to send extra bottles of oil to pay express charges. I hereby agree to dispose of this oil at 25c per [illegible] and give away one of the beautiful art pictures free with each bottle. I will send you the $ 00 that I collect for the oil, it being understood that you are then to ship me, at once, the full 42-piece set of Beautiful, Wild Rose Pattern, Art China Dishes, described above.

Name ____________________

P. O. ____________ State ____________

R. F. D. ______ Nearest Express Office ____________

The Boy Skipper

Or, The Skylark's Cruise

By Milford Merrill

[Copyright 1916 by W. D. Boyce Co.]

CHAPTER I.

THERE was an unsteady motion to the boat. "What makes it seem so funny?" asked little Edgar Stanley.

"It's the wind," answered Captain Stanley.

"The wind?" queried the boy. "It never shook our house when the wind blew."

"A boat and a house are different," returned the captain of the yacht Florence. "You see, the house is on solid [illegible]"

"Oh, yes, once, Uncle David," quickly uttered the small boy. "Papa and mamma went to Chicago in a great big steamboat. That didn't rock and stagger like this boat does. 'Cause 'twas bigger maybe?"

"Yes, and then perhaps there was no storm."

"No, I guess not," agreed the boy, laughing as he huddled to the captain's knee, clinging tightly with his chubby, soft fingers as if he would make sure of his safety in this manner.

The big hand of Captain Stanley patted and smoothed the long yellow curls, while a peculiar look flamed suddenly into the eyes of the man.

"What if——"

He got no further with his cogitations. A strong gust of wind sent the yacht half keel over in the trough of the newly aroused sea.

"It's going to be a storm, sure enough," he muttered.

The big man—he was broad and heavy of chest and shoulder—got to his feet and stood listening to the swish and batter of the water against the side of the craft, one hand holding fast to his small mite of a nephew.

"Stay here," he said, "while I go on deck and see what it is all about."

"No, Uncle Dave, let me go, too," pleaded the lad, clinging to the big hand of his relative.

"It wouldn't be safe, Eddy."

Lifting him in his arms, Captain Stanley placed the boy between the arms of an immense chair. "Now, you sit there till I call you. Will you mind Uncle Dave, Edgar?"

"Oh, but uncle, I dassent stay here all alone," whimpered the boy.

For some reason the lad had grown timid, something unusual with him, as he was the son of one of the strongest-nerved men of the copper country—Nathaniel Stanley, the man who had by the simple force of his native genius forged to the front as one of the copper kings of the Superior country.

"Silly boy!" sneered the captain petulantly.

Edgar stood still, watching the captain as he ascended the steps leading to the deck. He began to whimper again. As he essayed to walk across the floor, he staggered and fetched up against the wall. Then he groaned and sank to the floor, burying his face in his arms. There he lay for some time without seeming life or motion. Meanwhile Captain Stanley went on deck.

The wind came out of the northwest in rapidly increasing gusts. The captain spoke to the man at the wheel.

"It's the equinox all right, Cap'n," grunted old Solomon.

"Time for it, that's so," agreed Stanley, who moved along the rail, his thoughts beating a wild tattoo in his brain.

"Why not?" he muttered. "I've always had the hard end of life, while Brother Nat has skimmed along, hitting the high places without a mishap. He's rich as a Jew while I—well, this yacht is about all I possess in the world. It isn't right for one in the family to have all the good things. I get a hundred dollars to land the boy at Chicago, delivered into the hands of folks who are strangers to me. Ah, that was a smasher!"

The latter ejaculation was called forth by an unusually strong gust of wind.

The captain clutched the rail and glared into the intense darkness. Back to the north a hundred miles foamed the waters thru the Straits of Mackinac. From St. Ignace he had come with no cargo on board, since he was bound on an especial trip in behalf of his only brother, Nathaniel, the copper king of Mesaba Range.

As the wind increased in fury Captain Stanley believed they were to have an unpleasant, not to say dangerous, trip down the Michigan lake. It was past the middle of September, late enough to expect storms of a serious nature. The mind of the captain was deeply agitated.

"Uncle David!"

The man started as tho stung by an adder.

There at his side was little Edgar, his small hands clutching at his sleeve. How had he ever got here without mishap?

"You little rat!" broke forth Captain Stanley.

"Oh, but, uncle, I was afraid down there all alone!" whined the boy.

"Well, well, it's much safer down there than here," remonstrated the man. "It's a wonder you wasn't blown into the water."

He lifted and held the boy against his breast.

Again came that terrible temptation.

"He is rich, I am poor. He is much older than I. Some day, perhaps——"

And then the strong man shrank back, clasping tight to his bosom the little son of the copper king—his own brother's child, who had been intrusted to his care with all the confidence of a loving brother.

"No!" he gasped. "I cannot do it!"

With that he reeled across the deck. The arms of little Edgar clung tightly to his uncle's neck.

"You won't let me fall, will you, Uncle Dave?"

"No, child, no!"

Again the storm roared. The wind howled in frightful fury across the water. The yacht pitched half seas under. A giant wave surged across the polished deck, tripping the strong man to his knees.

The fingers of Edgar slipped from their hold.

"Don't let me drown, Uncle Dave!"

With a mighty effort the captain regained his footing, one hand put out to steady himself against the rail.

"You oughtn't to have come, little chap!" he groaned.

The atmosphere grew suddenly chill. A benumbed feeling gripped the captain. Edgar fell to the rail, and a vision of sudden wealth flashed across the brain of the strong man of the North, while the godless tempter stirred again in his heart.

Little Edgar had lost his grip on the neck of his uncle, his small hands clawing wildly after a substance he could not find. He toppled there on the slippery rail of the boat one instant, and the next was swept away by a lurch and second wave of the sea.

"Save me, Uncle Dave, save me!"

A child's startled scream swept up from the boiling sea.

Giant Captain Dave leaned over the rail. From out the cloud-spanned sky came a vivid flash of lightning, the first of the night, and what the man saw riveted his attention for all time—a small white face, up-swung little hands, with wild appeal for help from both.

A second flash of lightning and the waves rolled on. The baby face was gone, and David Stanley stood under the midnight sky, knowing that he was now the sole heir to his elder brother's vast property of the copper range.

"Eddy, Eddy!" called the man, almost pitching into the boiling waters in his effort to save the boy.

It was too late! Nothing but a wide expanse of tumbled waves greeted his strained vision. And then, five minutes after the boy had fallen to the grave of waters, stalwart David Stanley clutched his brow with a wild groan of remorse.

"It wasn't my fault," he argued finally. "I warned him to stop below, but he would come on deck, and this is the result."

"But you might have saved him," whispered a voice in his ear.

"No, no, that is a lie!"

Shrieking the words, big Captain Stanley reeled across the deck, plunging down the stairs to the small cabin, where he fell on his face in an apparently helpless condition.

The morning dawned late. The wind still tossed the billows, but the main part of the storm had passed, and David Stanley, white of face, with eyes that would never seem the same, haunted as they were by a vision of a boy's hopeless, pleading face and groping hands, ordered the yacht about to take up the return trip to the port from whence it sailed.

CHAPTER II.

THE schooner Skylark was beating up the shore toward Ironport on Lake Superior. She was facing a stiff breeze, and progress was necessarily slow.

Her skipper, a boy of perhaps 17, stood on the after-deck talking with a boy about his own age. Both were excellent specimens of physical perfection, altho the two young fellows in no other way resembled each other.

Phil Hatchway, the skipper, was a well-knit lad of medium height, with chestnut hair, inclined to curl, an honest, manly face, tanned deeply from exposure to sun and storm, and eyes deeply, darkly brown.

His companion was fully half a head taller, with a rather pale, scholarly face, deep-set gray eyes and hair that was really a delicate saffron yellow. He was neatly groomed and appeared at his ease. In fact, his manner in speaking with Phil was on the familiar order.

The two were bosom friends. Elias Caswell was recently from school, and very fond of talking shop. Phil's education had been received in the common school, yet his native intelligence was of the highest order.

"We will soon be there, Phil," said the taller boy, as he gazed sharply to windward, where could be discerned the whitecaps beating against the long ore dock within the harbor. "I am so glad."

"Tired of the water, eh, Elias?"

"Not exactly."

"Well, I can't blame you. It is tedious for one unused to the lakes, putting in a week's time in a sailing vessel. I have thought some of having the Skylark fitted over into a steam craft. There's but one objection."

"And that, Phil?"

"Daddy's objection."

"Your father would rather retain the old craft then?"

"Yes," said the boy skipper. "Daddy says he has passed some of the happiest days of his life on the Skylark, and he wants me to retain it as it is while he lives, and, of course, I expect to do so."

"But the pater is far from being on the downward course, eh, Phil?"

A sudden shadow darkened the face of Phil Hatchway.

"Father isn't in the best of health," said he. "You know I was but second in command while he was able to stand the racket."

"I did not know. How long have you been in command?"

"Something less than a year."

"And do you like the work, Phil?"

"Why, yes," hesitatingly answered the boy.

"Yet there are far better opportunities for a young fellow on land. You realize that, Phil."

The boy captain shook his head, turning away to speak with one of the men. Elias whistled and walked down the length of the stanch schooner. He was about to visit the Lake Superior country for the first time. His health was not quite robust, and at the advice of the family physician young Caswell was desirous of locating for a time among the breezy hills of the famous copper country. He had chosen the Skylark as his mode of conveyance because of his friendship for her captain, than whom in all the world he had no better friend. Nor were the boys widely separated financially. Both depended on their own exertions for a living.

"I think I told you," said Elias, when his friend, the skipper, returned, "that I expected to find a job in the copper country?"

"So I understood."

"I have a letter of recommendation from one of the best citizens of my home town to one of the leading men of the copper country."

"Ah, is that so? Why did you not tell me this, Elias?"

"It was my little secret, Phil," laughed the other. "Now that we are almost at the journey's end, I will say that I have high hopes of landing a job with the great mogul of Ironport."

"The great mogul?"

"You know, of course, whom I mean?"

"I can think of only one man to fill that estimate, Elias."

"Well?"

"David Stanley, the multimillionaire."

Rupture Simple Home Treatment

Do Away With Steel and Rubber Bands that chafe and pinch. Stuart's PLAPAO PADS are different from the truss, being self-adhesive medicine applicators, therefore no slipping, "digging in" or grinding pressure. No straps, buckles or springs attached. Soft as Velvet—Easy to Apply—Inexpensive. Hundreds of [illegible] from those cured. Awarded Gold Medal and Grand Prix. Write today for Trial Plapao and Illustrated Book, absolutely FREE. Nothing to pay, nothing to return. Plapao Co., Block 273 St. Louis, Mo.

FREE TRIAL OF PLAPAO

Painful Swollen Veins Quickly Relieved

Mrs. R. M. Remler, of Federal, Kansas, writes an interesting account of her success in reducing a severe [illegible] that should be encouraging to others [illegible] She suffered with badly swollen [illegible] (one had broken), for [illegible] Jr., was faithfully [illegible] quote from her [illegible] in the veins left, it was all [illegible] ed me since." [illegible] liniment—healing, [illegible] pleasant to use [illegible] request [illegible]

W. F. YOUNG, P. D. F., 337 Temple St. Springfield, Mass.

Vacant Government Land

HOW TO GET A FARM FREE

A Billion Acres Open to Homestead Entry and Purchase

FULL INFORMATION to LAND SEEKERS

About the United States Vacant Lands and How to Secure Them

Also, the number of acres and the kind of land described that is open to settlement in each county of every public land state and territory. The Location of Each Land Office to which Applications are made, with blank form of application. It tells about Irrigation and Irrigated Lands, [illegible] Lands, how [illegible] and Millions with Diagrams and Tables Revised to Date. 112 pages

PRICE, PAPER COVERS, 25c, POSTPAID.

W. C. WATKINS, Box 1505, Parnassus, Pa.

LADIES, PRESERVE YOUR YOUTHFUL APPEARANCE.

Madame Mig[illegible] Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every [illegible] freckles, pimples, [illegible] or wrinkles, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and ruddiness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years, and [illegible] using it and are more than delighted with the results. Send us ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 491 Blairsville, Pa.

YOUR HEART

Does it Flutter, Palpitate or Skip Beats? Have you Shortness of Breath, Tenderness, Numbness, or Pain in left side, Dizziness, Fainting Spells, Spots before eyes, Sudden Starting in sleep, Nervousness, Hungry or Weak Spells, Oppressed Feeling in chest, Choking Sensation in throat, Painful to lie on left side, Sinking or Smothering Sensation, Difficult Breathing, Heart Dropsy or Swelling of feet or ankles? If you have one or more of the above symptoms, don't fail to use Dr. Kinsman's Heart Tablets. Not a secret medicine. It is said that one person out of every four has a weak heart. Probably three-fourths of these do not know it, and hundreds wrongfully treat themselves for the Stomach, Lungs, Kidneys or Nerves. Don't take any chances when Dr. Kinsman's Heart Tablets are within your reach. More than 1000 endorsements furnished.

FREE TREATMENT COUPON

Any sufferer mailing this coupon, with their name and P. O. Address, to Dr. F. G. Kinsman, Box 951, Augusta, Maine, will receive a box of Heart Tablets for trial by return mail, postpaid, free of charge. Delays are dangerous. Write at once—to-day.

PILES TREATED AT HOME BY NEW ABSORPTION METHOD

If you suffer from bleeding, itching, blind or protruding Piles, send me your address, and I will tell you how to treat yourself at home by the new absorption method; and will also send some of this home treatment free for trial, with references from your own locality if requested. Users report immediate relief and speedy cures. Send no money, but tell others of this offer. Write today to Mrs. M. Summers, Box 457, South Bend, Ind.

I Print MY OWN

Cards, circulars, book, paper Press $5. Larger $18. Rotary $60. Save money. Print for others, big profit. All easy, rules sent. Write factory for catalogue presses, TYPE, cards. THE PRESS CO. D-24, MERIDEN, CONN.

Gallstones Avoid operating. Internal remedy. (No Oil.) Symptoms are Aches or Pains in Stomach, Back, Side or Shoulders, Colic, Gas, Indigestion, Biliousness, Sick Headaches, Nervousness, Catarrh, Constipation, Yellow, Sallow Skin, Appendicitis, Stomach, Liver. Gall sufferers, write for medical Book FREE

Galstone Remedy Co., Dept. E-78, 219 So. Dearborn Street, Chicago

LADIES, $1000! I positively guarantee my great successful "Compound." Safely relieves some of the longest, most obstinate, abnormal affections in 3 to 5 days. No harm, pain or interference with work. Mail $1.50, Double Strength, $2.00. BOOKLET FREE. Write today. Dr. C. L. Southington Remedy Co., 515 Main St., Kansas City, Mo.

DROPSY Treated One Week Free. Short breathing relieved in a few hours; swelling and water reduced in a few days; regulates liver, kidneys, and heart. Write for Free Trial Treatment. Collum Dropsy Remedy Co., Dept. 6, Atlanta, Ga

FORTUNE TELLING by Cards, Dominoes, Grounds of Coffee, [illegible] Palmistry, Physiology, Napoleon's Oraculum Dictionary of Dreams, Birthday Readings from Nativity, 10c P'd. Big Catalog Free. STAR SALES CO., 4411 Drexel Boulevard, Chicago, Illinois.

PILES CURED OR NO PAY

is my proposition to every one I treat by MY MILD SERUM-LIKE TREATMENT. Write Today for 7-Day Trial Offer FREE. DR. McCLEARY, Room 283, 10th and McGee, Kansas City, Mo.

LADIES Send for our free catalogue describing the Bee Cell Supporter. "A Boon to Womankind." Made of pure soft rubber. Address BEE CELL CO., Dept. 10, White Bldg., BUFFALO, N. Y.

MENDING TISSUE THE WONDER OF THE AGE. No sewing or darning. Repairs clothing, silk, satin, cotton goods, ribbons, fabrics of all kinds, kid gloves, mackintoshes, umbrellas, parasols, stockings, etc. Package, postpaid, 10 cents, three packages, 25 cents. Address PENN PUBLISHING CO., Parnassus, Pa.

"You hit it the first time, old chap."

"Well, if you can please him your future is established," assured the boy skipper, with a grave face.

"Is he that so hard to satisfy?"

"The hardest in the copper country, they tell me."

"Do you know him, Phil?"

"No."

"That's strange."

"Why strange?"

"You have sailed these waters for many years—that is, with your father and later as your own boss. It seems strange to me that you have not in all these voyages to the Superior country met David Stanley, the copper king."

"It is true, nevertheless," declared Phil, smiling. "I am no hand to scrape acquaintances among the upper crust, Elias. And this man Stanley has the name of being very stiff-necked and proud. This trip, however, I expect to meet his highness—to beard the lion in his den, so to speak."

"How is that?"

"Did I not tell you that I am loaded with flour and meats for the firm of Stanley & Weymouth?"

"If you did I had forgotten it. I am glad of it, tho. We can call on the great man together."

This ended the conversation between the boys for that time.

The Skylark rounded to at the Ironport dock in the edge of the evening, the boy captain looking after securing the craft before venturing inland.

Elias Caswell stood apparently waiting.

"Not tonight," said the captain, as his friend stood waiting for him to accompany him to the home of the big copper miner. "I have a lot to do before bedtime. I'll see you in the morning, when I expect to call at the office of Mr. Stanley."

"All right, Phil."

Elias Caswell passed on up the dock in some trepidation as to his reception by the king of Copperland.

Meantime Phil Hatchway saw that everything was made taut for the night on board the schooner, and after consulting with the mate, Jean Beesmer, he turned his steps uptown.

He had been in Ironport on a former occasion, and knew the business part quite well. He made his way toward the main street, and was about to cross this when he saw a man step from the curb almost in front of a speeding carriage driven by a drunken jehu.

"Ah!"

The man staggered, caught himself as he sprang backward, and would have fallen had not the quick hand of the boy captain caught his arm and whirled him from beneath the feet of the prancing animals.

The man glanced confusedly up into the face of his rescuer.

"Well," he gasped, "that was a narrow escape! Thank you for your aid. I might have been trampled. It was partly my fault, too."

"The driver is evidently the worse for liquor," responded Phil. "It might be the proper thing to call the police."

"No," quickly answered the other, a strongly built man of 50, whose neat business suit and alert eyes bespoke a man of affairs, "I was to blame myself. Thoughts woolgathering, likely enough," and he forced a laugh.

Boy and man now crossed the street side by side.

"Will you accompany me to my office, sir?"

The boy captain hesitated. He had thought of doing a little private business this evening, but somehow this alert-mannered business man attracted him most strangely.

"I am David Stanley," the man spoke again. "You did me a good turn just now and I would like to know more of you. Your face seems familiar."

"But yours is not," ventured the boy. "We are total strangers, sir, altho I have heard of David Stanley, the big copper king. You are that man, I take it?"

"I am David Stanley," spoke the man; "as to that other part I do not think it applies to me. There are others who have more money than I."

The man seemed disinclined to accept the public designation of his greatness, which rather pleased our boy friend. Modesty, even among the truly great, was something so seldom seen.

"I have a small cargo consigned to Stanley & Weymouth," said Phil. "I am glad that I met you so early. Tomorrow I will see that the freight is unloaded at your dock."

"Ah, from my Chicago dealers, I suppose. Now your name is——"

"Philip Hatchway, commander of the schooner Skylark, my father's ship," responded the boy, with a degree of pride, for he was never so happy as when talking shop.

"I am happy to know you, Mr. Hatchway," and the business man halted to press the hand of his companion. "No doubt we shall become better acquainted as time passes. I make it a practice to become personally acquainted with all my shippers.

Phil accompanied the gentleman to his rather pretentious office.

"Now, then, tell me about yourself, young man." Thus spoke Mr. Stanley after he had motioned his caller to a chair.

The boy skipper sat down. He was not quite at his ease. He surmised that the rich man had brought him here for a purpose, and he would much rather be on the street looking after his own immediate affairs.

"I am glad to know you, Phil Hatchway," proceeded Mr. Stanley, producing and lighting a cigar. He proffered his case to Phil, but the latter politely declined to accept the weed.

"Don't smoke, eh?" said Mr. Stanley, with a low laugh. "Good sign all right enough—that is, in a way—but most men smoke all the same. When I was your age I used to steal cigars from the old man and smoke 'em on the sly in the barn, or rather behind it. Here's something you may like, however."

"The old man?" queried Phil, as the big man leaned over and pulled out a drawer.

"Yes, Dad, you know. Now, here's something worth while, young fellow," and he produced a flask and glasses. "My private supply, you know; imported wine of the finest."

Again Phil shook his head.

"What's that? Don't touch wine?" The man was plainly surprised.

"I have never seen the need of it, sir," mildly returned the boy skipper.

"But how can you run things on shipboard without liquor?"

"I have done so very comfortably, Mr. Stanley."

The more he saw of this great copper mogul the less did Phil feel impressed with his mightiness. His crude reference to "the old man" shocked the boy's finer sensibilities. He had always looked upon his father with a great deal of respect. It was not only vulgar, but unfilial, thus to refer to his paternal ancestor.

"Don't go yet," protested Stanley, as the boy rose to his feet.

"I see no use in prolonging this talk, sir——"

"Sit down, I tell you," said the other, with a sweep of his hand.

Phil obeyed. Stanley removed his cigar, poured out and drank a glass of the wine, then smote the desk before him with a clinched hand.

"I like you, boy, I like you!" he cried. "Got no bad habits. Full commander of a ship, and not out of your teens. Good as gold!"

The speaker produced a wallet from which he counted out several greenbacks. The pile he shoved toward the other.

"What is this for, sir?" queried the surprised youth.

"For you, of course."

"But the freight charges have not been fully made out."

"Who's talking about freight, boy?" cried Stanley, with an upright toss of a big hairy hand. "I want you to understand that I don't forget a favor. You probably saved my life——"

"Nonsense!" and Phil laughed ironically.

"It's true. Here, take this money. There's a hundred at least. You can find use for it, I reckon."

But the boy skipper was not to be thus patronized. He rose indignantly to his feet, refusing to look a second time at the money.

"You won't let me pay you, boy?" gasped the astounded man.

"That's too much money," flung out the young skipper. "The life you say I saved wasn't worth it!"

And then Phil started for the entrance of the office. Almost at the same instant the door was flung wide open, and across the threshold breezed one of the prettiest girls the boy skipper had ever beheld.

CHAPTER III.

"MR. HATCHWAY, my daughter, Maida." The boy skipper stood with bared head before the slender prettiness of the girl who had come so unexpectedly into the rich copper miner's office. Maida nodded and laughed prettily, then held out her hand in token of friendship.

"I had no idea you were occupied with business just now, papa," said she, as she turned to the mine owner. "Mamma sent me to tell you that he has come, and that she wants you at the house as soon as possible."

Blue eyes, bright, fluffy golden hair, a child of 15 was this girl. Phil felt light as a feather as he gazed at her. If he only had a sister as pretty!

"Very well," at once announced the mine owner. "I'll go right back with you, Maida. Our friend, Mr. Hatchway, will excuse us, I reckon?"

Our boy skipper reckoned he would and passed outside.

"I will see you in the morning," said Mr. Stanley, as he closed his office door.

Phil went uptown to one of the hotels, where he registered for the night.

"Now then, Sis, who the dickens is HE?"

"Mr. Hatchway, you said," demurely replied the girl, "and he is certainly a nice-looking boy, much handsomer than the other one."

"Why, you crazy girl, what are you talking about?" cried David Stanley.

"About the young man I just saw with you at the office."

"Yes, to be sure. Well, he's not a bad looker, and he saved me from some bad bruises. I offered to pay him, but he took my offer as an insult. These young plebeians make me tired."

And then Mr. Stanley related his adventure on the street, with the part the boy skipper had played in it.

"And you offered to pay for that?" gasped Maida.

"Sure. Why not?"

"No wonder he was indignant."

"I imagined money would be better than grateful words," declared the mine owner, "especially for one in his condition."

"What do you mean by 'his condition,' papa?"

"Why, a poor coaster. Not many of them have a penny in the bank."

"But this one seemed a real gentlemanly boy."

"Huh! If he hadn't saved me from a bad smash-up I wouldn't have noticed him far enough to bring him over here. He is old Tobias Hatchway's son, and he isn't counted much down the lake shore."

"Do you know him—this Mr. Tobias, papa?"

"Only by reputation. Hatchway, not Tobias; that last is his Christian name. This boy Phil reminds me of some one I have seen in the past."

The old mine owner smoked furiously as he walked to a cab and assisted his daughter into it. The two were soon whirled away uptown.

Here, at the palatial residence of the millionaire, the tall boy, Elias Caswell, had preceded them. It was of this youth that the girl spoke when she first entered the office.

"He is looking for the job you advertised, papa."

$2.50 a Month

The masterpiece of watch manufacture—adjusted to the second, positions, temperature and isochronism. Encased at factory into your choice of the exquisite new watch cases.

21 Jewel Burlington

All sizes for both men and women

The great Burlington Watch sent on simple request. Pay at rate of $2.50 a month. You get the watch at the same price even the wholesale jeweler must pay.

Write Today for Free Watch Book

See handsome color illustrations of all the newest designs in watches that you have to choose from. Your name and address on a postcard is enough. Get this offer while it lasts. Write today.

Burlington Watch Co. Dept. 1019 19th & Marshall Blvd. Chicago

NEW RUPTURE CURE

DON'T WEAR A TRUSS.

RUPTURE

Brooks' Appliance. New discovery. Wonderful. No obnoxious springs or pads. Automatic Air Cushions. Binds and draws the broken parts together as you would a broken limb. No salves. No plasters. No lies. Durable, cheap. Sent on trial to prove it. Full information and booklet FREE.

C. E. BROOKS, 1843 D. State St., Marshall, Mich.

OUTFIT FREE

Made-to-Measure

No extra charge for extreme Peg Tops

We Pay the Express or Postage

$2.75

Quality, Fit and Workmanship GUARANTEED

Just to prove the wonderful quality, style and value of our tailoring, we make this astounding offer. Pants cut in the latest style. NO EXTRA CHARGE for peg tops no matter how extreme you order them. Sixty-four beautiful samples to choose from—Sent you FREE. Don't miss this bargain opportunity.

AGENTS WANTED

We pay BIG money to our agents everywhere. We want a good live hustler in every town to take orders for our celebrated made-to-measure clothes. Turn your spare time into cash and make more money than you ever made before.

NO CAPITAL NEEDED
No Experience Required

The Progress line is the biggest money maker in the country. You can't fail to make good with the magnificent outfit which we send you—all charges prepaid. Progress clothes cost less, wear better and are more stylish than any other made-to-measure clothes. We guarantee every garment.

SPLENDID OUTFIT FREE

Contains an unusually attractive assortment of woolens; also order blanks, stationery, tape line and everything necessary to make big money. With our help and selling talks, success is sure. Be ready for the big money harvest.

PROGRESS TAILORING CO.
DEPT. 105, CHICAGO

WANTED---30,000 BOYS

WE HAVE 30,000 boys who sell our great papers, The Saturday Blade, Chicago Ledger, Farming Business and Lone Scout. Thousands of them earn from $1.00 to $5.00 a week. People in every town and R. F. D. know our great papers and we have received thousands of letters from people asking the name of the local agent so they could buy the papers from them. We want 30,000 more agents, so that there will be an agent in every town and R. F. D. route, and to get them we have a wonderful new plan which gives our agents cash profits on every paper they sell and

VALUABLE PREMIUMS AND FREE APPOINTMENT TO THE LONE SCOUTS OF AMERICA

No experience is necessary, the less experience you have the better. We show you when you start just where to get the customers, how to sell the papers and just what to do. No town or R. F. D. route is too small to sell our papers in. Thousands of our agents in the smallest towns and R. F. D. routes are making the biggest money every week and are getting the valuable premiums. Remember, you can't lose anything. We send the papers all in one bundle so that they come to you all at one time on Friday. You have a paper to sell to every man, woman and boy. We show you just how to build up a route of regular customers that means steady profits every week.

IT IS EASY TO GET STARTED TODAY

but you must hurry, for the agencies are being grabbed up quickly by boys. It takes no money to start. There is no expense or risk to you at any time. All we ask is that you do as we say. Will you? Just fill out the blank below and we will send you a complete agent's outfit absolutely free and your first week's supply of papers.

W. D. BOYCE CO., DEPT. 2, 512 N. DEARBORN ST., CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

I accept the agency for your 4 papers. Send me as many copies of each as you think I can sell the first week. I will be pleased to receive my Certificate of Membership in the Lone Scouts and badge and booklet of instructions from Chief Totem FREE. Also tell me how to get the valuable premiums

Name ....

Street or R. F. D. No. ....

Town .... State ....

"Eh?" grunted the old man.

"Mr. Caswell, papa."

"Who'n Satan's Mr. Caswell? Are ye dreaming, lass?" suddenly ejaculated Stanley, tossing his chewed end of cigar out the window.

"He is a boy who has come looking for a position. He would have gone to the office, only mamma suggested that he remain to dinner."

"So!" growled the man, "you were entertaining this young plebeian at dinner while I was sweating in the office, breaking my back, ruining my brain over complicated business matters. Nice friends I've got in my wife and her child!"

There was accentuated bitterness in the words. The girl laid a hand on his arm.

"Papa, dear," she began.

He threw off the caressing hand roughly, snarling in a bearish voice:

"None of your softsoap, Maida Storrs. You and your mother don't care a curse for me personally. It was my money she married me for, and her daughter is just like her——"

"Father!" gasped sweet Maida, protestingly. The next instant her face was buried in his sleeve, her slender form shaking with sobs.

"There, there, little one, don't cry!" murmured Stanley, gently smoothing his stepdaughter's hair with his big hand. "I didn't mean all that, of course; only I'm in a dreadful pickle about business affairs, and I lose my temper sometimes."

"Did that boy bring you trouble, papa?"

"D'ye mean the boy Phil? Not he. There's nothing very much wrong, my child, but I am tired out."

"That's what mamma thought, and she was glad that young Mr. Caswell had come to your aid. She thinks he will suit you all right."

"Maybe so," grunted the other.

It will be seen that Mr. Stanley, even tho one of the high-up men of the copper country, was very much a growler, and of irascible temper. His stepdaughter Maida had found it so, altho under her mother's instructions she had endeavored to win his fatherly affections.

Elias Caswell was sitting in one of the smaller parlors of the Stanley residence looking over some pictures when he met with an unexpected interruption. He had dined with Mrs. Stanley and Maida, and had been shown to this room to amuse himself till the coming of the man of the house.

"You will please excuse me for a short time, Mr. Caswell," said Mrs. Stanley, as she ushered him into the room. "I expect my husband home at any moment now."

"Never mind me, Mrs. Stanley," smiled back the tall boy as the woman departed.

Not ten minutes later the door opened and a queer object breezed across the threshold.

"Lordamassy! What's this?"

Elias raised his eyes to look upon something—neither man, boy nor woman was it—but a tall, thin chap, clad in the latest cut of men's attire, a nifty little yellow cane thrust against his blue lips, which he seemed to delight in sucking to the detriment of the varnish. A pair of smoked glasses rested against the bridge of a thin, sharp-pointed apology for a nose.

After one glance, the apparition, rather startling to Elias, stepped toward the visitor with a teetering gait that reminded one of a certain species of long-legged snipe.

"Judgment to come! And is this the new bookkeeper?"

The speaker held out a clawlike hand to Elias. The voice that put the query was weak, squeaking and rasping, and seemed to indicate weak lungs.

Our tall boy stood up and shook hands with this rare freak.

"I'm not hired yet," said he, "but I have hopes."

"Oh, you'll land all right if you listen to me, Mr. —— what's your name?"

The grin accompanying the words was very sickly indeed.

"I am Elias Caswell."

"I am delighted to meet you, Mr. Caswell."

Again the queer youth shook the hand of the occupant of the room.

Plucking at an imaginary mustache the dude drew a chair from the wall and sat down.

"You live here, I suppose?" asked Elias, who was rather amused at the queer-looking youth who so unexpectedly breezed into the room.

"Oh, yes, I'm a regular fixture at Mound Grove. Aunt Jule couldn't get along without her honey boy, and the little one, Miss Maida, just dotes on me. We're sort of fourth cousins, you know.'

"No," said Elias, "I did not know."

"You will know if you stop long at Mound Grove," and the lavender youth grinned weakly.

Dudes had not been in evidence in the copper country till this one came—a rare specimen, Elias thought. And he was related to the pretty girl who flitted in and out among the flowers in the big conservatory! What a strange contrast!

"You haven't told me your name," said Elias, directly.

"Really?"

"You may be Jones or Brown——"

"No such vulgar cognomen as these, betcher life. I'm from way daown East I want you to understand—from Portland, Maine," and the dandy dropped his cane, growing red in the face as he leaned over to regain it. "Ah, gadzooks! as the old knights would say, that's an effort."

"Well, Mr. ——"

"Selkirk, sir."

"Mr. Selkirk?" with a low laugh. "Doubtless your first name is Alexander——"

"Not much it isn't! I was called Jibb by my mother, who was the wife of Admiral Jibb Selkirk of the American Navy. I have a long line of blue-blooded ancestors behind me, I want you to understand, sir."

"I shall be most happy to understand it, if it is true."

"Don't insinuate that I am not veracious, young fellow," rasped the husky, squeaking voice of the Admiral's son. "I'm not used to being referred to in any such manner by the common herd, to which I see plainly you belong."

"And you are of the cream of the upper crust, Mr. Selkirk?"

"Now you're talking."

"As for myself, I am a plain American citizen," smiled Elias. "May I ask if you think of following in the illustrious footsteps of your paternal ancestor?"

"Very likely I shall," drawled Mr. Selkirk. "I can have an official position on board one of the big ships any time I say the word, don't cher know?"

"Then why not take it?"

"Just for Aunt Jule's and Maida's sakes, sir."

"Ah, then they object?"

"Very decidedly. I might lose my life in some fight, you know——"

"Which would prove a terrible blow to your very distant relatives, no doubt."

"Don't laugh, Mr. Caswell. This is a serious subject. I am here only for a short visit. I expect to return soon to the Atlantic seaboard and take command of a ship. There may be war one of these days and our country would require every patriot to respond to her call."

"And you will be one of the first to go, Jibb. Let me congratulate you on your splendid patriotism, sir."

The speaker quickly rose and walked over to Jibb with extended hand.

On the instant the door opened and David Stanley brushed into the room.

"Jibb, you rascal, get out of here!" roared the husky mine owner. "How many times have I got to tell you not to come in sight when we have callers? D'ye hear me? Git out!"

"Oh, Uncle Dave!" wheezed the slim Mr. Selkirk.

He offered no excuse for his presence, but hustled out with head hanging, and an air of abject humiliation.

"Good riddance," growled the big mine owner, after which he turned to his visitor, introduced himself, and dropped into a chair.

Elias was not a little awed at the brusque manners of his host, of whom he had been warned.

"You are here seeking a job, they tell me, Mr. Caswell?"

"Yes, sir," came the reply, in a low voice. "I thought I would apply for any clerical position you might have vacant, sir."

"Oh, you did?" exclaimed the man, with a raucous laugh. "Well, there's none open."

"None? I understood from Mrs. Stanley——"

"No matter what you understood," brusquely interrupted the copper king. "I'm not run by women."

This unusual story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

THE BIRD'S PLEA.

Dear kiddies, Christmas will soon be here,
The happiest time of all the year.
While you are enjoying your Christmas toys
And your little hearts filled with Christmas joys,
Please think of the wee birds out in the snow,
Where cruel winds whistle and fiercely blow,
Our home is the air; our roof is the sky;
When we've nothing to eat we freeze and die,
Dear kiddies, you live in houses so warm,
Sheltered from cold and the blinding storm.
You'll have "Merry Christmas" and plenty to eat.
Oh, please give your little bird friends a treat!
We're so hungry. Dear little kiddies, please
Hang us some Christmas out on the trees.

* * *

Industrious.

"I never saw a more industrious woman than that Mrs. Crum," the teacher remarked before the Kentucky mountain boys and girls gathered at the school dinner table. "Why, even when I meet her on the road she pulls her yarn and needles out of her pocket and goes to knitting."

Teacher's manifestation of surprise brought forth a volley of ejaculations from the children, each of whom had mother, aunt or cousin who was equally ardent at wool working.

"Oh," exclaimed one little fellow, reaching the climax of the discussion, "I had a grandmother who was the knittinest woman I ever knowed. She used to take her knitting to bed with her and every few minutes she woked up and throwed out a pair o' socks!"

* * *

It's impossible for a woman to preserve a secret so it will keep.

THIS 5-PASSENGER TOURING CAR AUTO FREE!

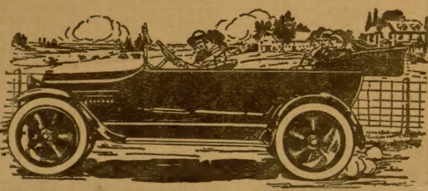
EASIER TO WIN THAN ANY OTHER CONTEST

This contest will not be advertised and pushed like so many others. There will be fewer contestants than in other contests and if you start right away you can win easily, this 1917 model, fully equipped, five-passenger touring car.

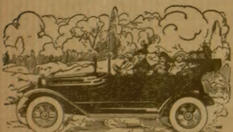
THIS AUTO FREE

A fine new five-passenger touring car will be given away absolutely free to some one who acts right away. Wouldn't you be happy and proud to own this fine automobile? Think of the fun you can have taking your friends out riding. And how all your relatives would enjoy the car. Hundreds of men, women, boys and girls all over the country are winning automobiles, etc. They win by starting early. As soon as they see the advertisement and puzzle they go to work and solve it and so get a great big start in the contest.

You can win this automobile in addition to splendid prizes such as watches, cameras and other things you like. Write us today sending your answer to the picture puzzle, with the faces marked, with four cents in stamps to help pay the postage and mailing expenses of the present you have won.



Solve the Puzzle and Win a Prize



This picture shows one of our friends driving an automobile like the one we are going to give away. In this picture there are six partly hidden faces which it will be lots of fun for you to find. It is not so easy to find the faces in this picture, but by close search and by twisting and turning the picture around, they will be revealed to you. Can you find them?

YOU WILL WIN A PRIZE

if you do; try it, don't give up. It will pay you. When you have found four of the faces, mark each with a cross (X), cut out the picture and mail it to us. When your answer is received we will send you a prize which we know you will appreciate, and it will be a big surprise to you. We will also make you a present of 2,000 free Auto votes, and tell you all about this splendid automobile, touring car or roadster, which we are going to give away. We will give away many other prizes for just a little effort.

W. D. Boyce Company, Auto Contest Manager, Dept. X,
500-514 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois.

Gentlemen: I have marked the four faces on the picture puzzle which I am sending you, together with four cents in stamps to help pay the postage and mailing expenses of the prize you have for me. Please tell me how I can become the owner of this five-passenger touring car delivered to me absolutely free. Also send me my certificate of entry and 2,000 free votes toward winning it. Let me know also how to earn cash commissions and the many splendid prizes you have for me.

My name is..

P. O., R. F. D., Box No., or St. No..

Town.. State..........................

2000 VOTES FREE

To test your quickness and to give you a good head start we are printing the auto prize puzzle picture shown to the left. In this picture there are six partly hidden faces which it will be lots of fun to find. Solve the puzzle, mark the faces, fill out the coupon and send it all to us with four cents in stamps to help pay the cost of mailing the special prize we will send you. We will also make you a present of 2,000 free auto votes and tell you all about this splendid five-passenger touring car. We are also going to give away many other prizes.

OTHER REWARDS TO ALL

This is the easiest and most liberal contest ever announced. It is so arranged that every one who takes part in the contest will be richly rewarded for everything, little or big, that one does. Remember you get the extra rewards right away. There is no waiting. You get splendid prizes and cash rewards without delay.

Up here in our big building we have boxes and boxes of golden treasures that are yours almost for the asking. We will give away hundreds of bicycles, phonographs, watches, flashlights, sets of dishes and many other presents too numerous to mention. Our plan is so simple that it seems more like a dream than a reality. Everybody gets a prize. We are a big company and delight in giving away valuable premiums to advertise our great weekly papers. Get your share of these presents. Solve the puzzle and mail the coupon now, before you turn this page. Get in on this grand prize distribution.

DON'T WAIT—MAIL THE COUPON TODAY!

We want to impress on you that it is very necessary to start at once. We are determined to give this automobile to some one free and it might as well be you. Don't delay another minute. Find at least four of the partly hidden faces on the puzzle picture, mark each with a cross (X), fill out the coupon, cut out the picture and coupon and mail them to us with four cents to help pay the cost of mailing expenses for the fine prize which we will send you for solving the puzzle. We will also give you 2,000 free votes toward winning this auto. There are no losers. You get prizes for everything you do—many of them. We will help you win this auto if you are quick. Mail the coupon right away. Address

W. D. BOYCE COMPANY,
500-514 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, Illinois

Ledger Embroidery

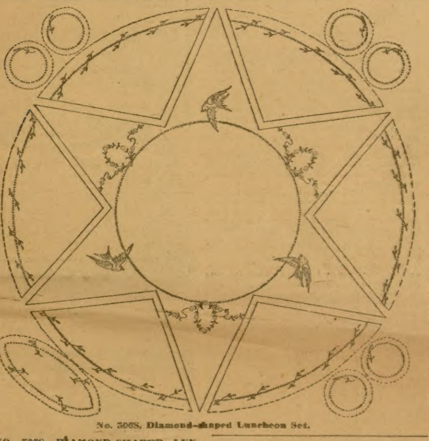
We call the attention of every woman to the beauty of the patterns displayed from week to week, and wish to impress upon each one the splendid quality of material that makes our offer a great bargain in every case. Every offer is complete. You can finish it up without buying anything extra. These designs are stamped on the best quality cloth, and every set comes to you complete, exactly as described. You are sure to find many articles that you want if you watch the Ledger each week, and it is so easy to get them. Any person can get one or all of the designs shown by sending us the amount of subscriptions to either the Chicago Ledger or Saturday Blade, required in the description under each article.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

Either the Chicago Ledger or Saturday Blade $1.00 a year each; 6 months for 50 cents. The Blade and Ledger together $1.50 a year (52 issues); 6 months for 75 cents; 4 months 50 cents.

........................CUT THIS OUT AND SEND WITH ORDER........................

CHICAGO LEDGER, 500-514 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois.
Embroidery Department:—
Enclosed please find $..............for..................................subscription to
(Name Time)
the.. Please send me free of all cost the
(Ledger or Blade or Both)
embroidery outfit No..
NAME ....
P. O. ....
Street No. or R. F. D. ....
Town ....State........................
This is a..................................Subscription.
(New or Renewal)



No. 5068, Diamond-shaped Luncheon Set.

NO. 5068, DIAMOND-SHAPED LUNCHEON SET.—The hostess entertaining at luncheon or afternoon tea will thoroly enjoy the use of this unusual set of linens, showing the bluebirds. This set consists of a diamond-shaped lunch cloth, 34x34 inches; six doilies, 4x4 inches; tray cloth, 4x10 inches; and six 10-inch napkins, all of which are plainly stamped in blue on white linen. We also include six skeins of embroidery floss in this offer. Given for $1.50 in subscriptions to the Blade and the Ledger.

Ends the Misery Of Wearing Worthless Trusses

How 60 Days Trial Is The Only Safe Way To Buy Anything For Rupture

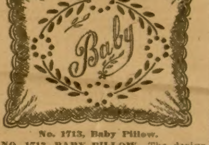
Here is something absolutely GUARANTEED to keep rupture from coming out—something that does away with the misery-causing leg-straps and body-springs.

Away With Leg-Strap and Spring Trusses

So far as we know, our guaranteed rupture holder is the only thing of any kind for rupture that you can get on 60 days' trial—the only thing we know of good enough to stand such a long and thorough test. It's the famous Cluthe Automatic Massaging Truss—made on an absolutely new principle—has 18 patented features. Self-adjusting. Does away with the misery of wearing belts, leg-straps and springs. Guaranteed to hold at all times—including when you are working, taking a bath, etc. Has cured in case after case that seemed hopeless.

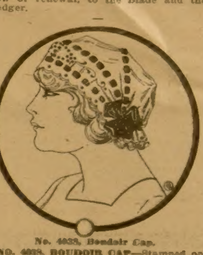
Write for Free Book of Advice—Cloth-bound, 104 pages. Explains the dangers of operation. Shows just what's wrong with elastic and spring trusses, and why drugstores should no more be allowed to fit trusses than to perform operations. Exposes the humbugs—shows how old-fashioned worthless trusses are sold under false and misleading names. Tells all about the care and attention we give you. Endorsements from over 5000 people, including physicians. Write to-day—find out how you can prove every word we say by making a 60 day test without risking a penny.

Box 25—Cluthe Co., 125 E. 23rd St., New York City



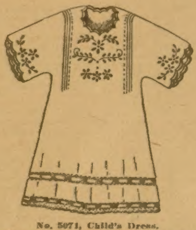
No. 1713, Baby Pillow.

NO. 1713, BABY PILLOW—The design is stamped on 16x18-inch white lawn, and enough material is included for back; also three skeins of floss for working design. Given for $1.00 in subscriptions, new or renewal, to the Blade and the Ledger.



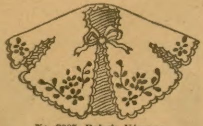
No. 4038, Boudoir Cap.

NO. 4038, BOUDOIR CAP—Stamped on a fine grade of white lawn, this boudoir cap makes a very pleasing effect. Just the thing for morning wear. We include four skeins of floss for working design. This will be sent for $1.00 in subscriptions, new or renewal, to either the Blade or the Ledger.



No. 5071, Child's Dress.

NO. 5071, CHILD'S DRESS—Latest pattern, the design is stamped on 1½ yards of white lawn or nainsook. We include three skeins of cotton floss for embroidering design. Sent for $1.50 in subscriptions, new or renewal, to the Blade and the Ledger.



No. 2005, Baby's Kimono.

NO. 2005, BABY'S KIMONO—Conventional design, is stamped on white linen. We also include three skeins of cotton floss for embroidering the design. This will be given for $1.00 in subscriptions, new or renewal, to either the Blade or the Ledger.

VETERINARY COURSE AT HOME

Taught in simplest English during spare time. Diploma granted. Cost within reach of all. Satisfaction guaranteed. Have been teaching by correspondence twenty years. Graduates assisted in many ways. Every person interested in stock should take it. Write for catalogue and full particulars . . FREE
London Vet. Correspondence School
Dept. 9 London, Ontario, Can.

AUTO FREE

I am going to give away a New 1917 OVERLAND or $720 in Cash. No money needed, just a few weeks' spare time work in your own community, if you live in the country or any town under 10,000. 40 Autos already given away. Write today for my new, easy, plan.
C. F. ALDRICH, Dept. 3, St. Paul, Minn.

FREE TO SUFFERERS

Our 100 page book will be sent FREE to any person suffering from Rheumatism, Eczema, Catarrh, Chronic Constipation, Liver or Stomach Trouble, Malaria, Enlarged Glands in Neck or Groin, Scrofula, Old Sores and Ulcers, Pimples and Blackheads, or any other trouble due to a poisonous condition of the blood. Many people go to Hot Springs for treatment or take mercury and potash without benefit. Write to us for our book and full particulars of our treatment. All correspondence strictly confidential.
THE C. E. GALLAGHER MEDICINE CO.
Sta. 1 1622 Pine St. St. Louis, Mo.

WETO GRAPH SECRET WRITING SYSTEM

Invaluable for lovers and for keeping recipes, addresses, secret memorandum or other information safe and private. No stranger can read your postals if you use the Weto Graph. Great fun for lovers or friends. Don't miss it. Send 10c and we will send the Weto Graph by mail, with full instructions. Address PENN PUBLISHING CO., Parnassus, Pa.

SORE LEGS HEALED

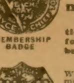
Open Legs, Ulcers, Enlarged Veins, Eczema, healed while you work. Write for book "How to Heal My Sore Legs at Home." Describe your case.
A. C. LIEPE, 612 Green Bay Avenue, MILWAUKEE, WIS.

PILES! FREE TREATMENT
We pay postage and send free Red Cross Pile Cure.
REA CO., Dept. 75, Minneapolis

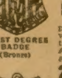
ASTHMA TREATMENT sent you on FREE TRIAL. If it cures, send $1.00; if not, don't. Give express office. Write today. W. K. Sterline, 836 Ohio Ave., Sidney, Ohio

142,884 LONE SCOUTS

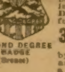
In 60 Weeks, 142,884 Boys have taken the following pledge as members of Lone Scouts of America:



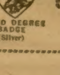
MEMBERSHIP BADGE



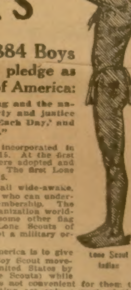
FIRST DEGREE BADGE (Bronze)



SECOND DEGREE BADGE (Bronze)



THIRD DEGREE BADGE (Silver)



Lone Scout Indian

"I pledge my allegiance to my flag and the nation for which it stands, with liberty and justice for all. I will 'Do a Useful Thing Each Day,' and be worthy of the name, Lone Scout."

The Lone Scouts of America was incorporated in Washington, District of Columbia, in 1915. At the first meeting of the incorporators, by-laws were adopted and W. D. Boyce was elected **Chief Totem.** The first Lone Scout took the pledge on October 25, 1915.

1 The Lone Scouts of America is for all wide-awake, ambitious boys everywhere. Any boy who can understand the pledge is eligible to membership. The pledge is so worded as to make the organization worldwide, including any boy living under some other flag than the United States flag. The Lone Scouts of America encourages patriotism, but is not a military organization in any sense.

2 The purpose of the Lone Scouts of America is to give the boys all the advantages of the Boy Scout movement (which was started in the United States by W. D. Boyce, Chief Totem of the Lone Scouts) while permitting them to operate alone if it is not convenient for them to belong to Tribes. Woodcraft and Scouting are only a part of the instructions. The Lone Scout motto is: **"Do a Useful Thing Each Day."** Every boy who lives up to this motto is going to be a successful man.

3 There are no membership dues or fees to pay; no expensive equipment for boys or their parents to buy. The Lone Scouts of America is not a money-making proposition. The organization is supported by the sale of its weekly magazine, "Lone Scout," in which instructions are given the Scouts. "Lone Scout" is sold by news agents for 3 cents a copy. Subscription rates, 25 cents four months, 75 cents a year.

4 As a member progresses in his Scout work he is awarded Degrees with appropriate Badges, and these Degrees make up Lodges. Badges of the first three Degrees (Tepee Lodge) are shown on the left. After the Tepee Lodge comes the Totem Pole Lodge. A member in this Lodge is entitled to put up a Lone Scout Totem Pole, upon which is placed a record of his Degrees.

5 In applying for membership, fill out the Application Blank given below, and send it with 2-cent stamp.

W. D. BOYCE, Chief Totem,
500 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.

..............................CUT OUT HERE..............................

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

H

CHIEF TOTEM, 500 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.

Date..1916.

I am ready, with consent of my parents or guardian, to take the Lone Scout Pledge, which I have read. Herewith find 2 cents in stamps to pay for mailing Certificate of Membership in the Lone Scouts of America, First Degree Instructions and Tribe Booklet.

Name.. Age...............
Town.. State...............
St. No., P. O., or R. F. D. ....

THE FAIRY CORNER

JEST 'FORE CHRISTMAS.

Father calls me William, sister calls me Will,
Mother calls me Willie, but the fellers call me Bill.
Mighty glad I ain't a girl—ruther be a boy,
Without them sashes, curls, an' things that's worn by Fauntleroy!
Love to chawnk green apples an' go swimmin' in the lake—
Hate to take the castor-ile they give for bellyache!
'Most all the time, the whole year round, there ain't no flies on me,
But jest 'fore Christmas I'm as good as I kin be!

Got a yeller dog named Sport, sick him on the cat!
First thing she knows she doesn't know where she is at!
Got a clipper sled, an' when us kids goes out to slide,
'Long comes the grocery cart, an' we all hook a ride!
But sometimes when the grocery man is worried and cross,
He reaches at us with his whip, an' larrups up his hoss,
An' then I laugh and holler: "Oh, ye never teched me!"
But jest 'fore Christmas I'm as good as I kin be!

Gran'ma says she hopes that when I git to be a man,
I'll be a missionarer like her oldest brother Dan,
As was et up by the cannibuls that lives in Ceylon's Isle,
Where every prospeck pleases, an' only man is vile!
But gran'ma she has never been to see a Wild West show,
Nor read the Life of Daniel Boone, or else I guess she'd know
That Buff'lo Bill an' cowboys is good enough for me!
Excep' jest 'fore Christmas, when I'm as good as I kin be!

And then old Sport he hangs around, so solemn like an' still,
His eyes they seem a-sayin': "What's the matter, little Bill?"
The old cat sneaks down off her perch an' wonders what's become
Of them two enemies of hern that used to make things hum!
But I am so perlite an' tend so earnestly to biz,
That mother says to father: "How improved our Willie is!"
But father, havin' been a boy hisself, suspicions me
When, jes 'fore Christmas, I'm as good as I kin be!

For Christmas, with its lots an' lots of candies, cakes an' toys,
Was made, they say, for proper kids an' not for naughty boys;
So wash yer face and bresh yer hair, an' mind yer p's and q's,
An' don't bust out yer pantaloons, and don't wear out yer shoes;
Say "Yessum" to the ladies, an' "Yessur" to the men,
An' when they's company, don't pass your plate for pie again;
But, thinkin' of the things yer'd like to see upon that tree,
Jest 'fore Christmas be as good as yer kin be!

—Eugene Field.

❧

SANTA'S MISTAKE.

Once upon a time, oh, ever so long ago, there was a little [illegible] he would take a peek at Santa Claus, when he came down the chimney. The little fellow went to bed, but he did not sleep. He lay awake a long time listening for his father and mother to come to bed.

"Are they never coming?" Louie said to himself. "Santa Claus will be here before they ever come up if they don't hurry. Why don't they ever come?"

So he fretted to himself until he heard his mother's bedroom door open, and he knew they had come to bed at last. He listened and all was still. He stole quietly into his mother's room, slipped into her dress, and came quietly down the stairs with a stocking in his hand. "I'll just hang one of mother's up instead of mine; it holds more. There, now, I will just sit here by the fireplace and when old Santa comes down I'll hide. If he does see me he will never know me in these clothes."

So Louie waited and waited for Santa Claus until he grew very sleepy. His head began to bob from one side to the other; his eyes grew heavy; he just could not hold them open.

"I'll just put my head down on this pillow until I hear him coming," he said to himself. But he never heard him come. He fell fast asleep.

About midnight Santa Claus stopped his reindeer at Louie's house. All was still; he threw his pack over his shoulder and slid down the chimney into the very room where Louie lay sleeping.

He rubbed his hands and looked around. Finally he spied Louie asleep.

"Why, bless my soul, the poor woman has fallen asleep. She must have worked hard today. I wonder if Louie has been a good boy this year. Let me see, where is his stocking?"

Santa looked all over, but there was no stocking for Louie.

"Well, well, well, what a joke this is on me. This is a girl's stocking. Why, I thought I knew Louie, I was sure he was a boy. Surely there was a boy here last year. Bless my soul, I must be forgetting. Can it be Louie is a girl, and a big girl at that? Well, well, what a joke on me!" Old Santa laughed until his sides ached, but Louie slept on.

Santa filled the stocking. "Here, let us see. Louie will want a sewing box, a book and some hair ribbons if he is a girl. What a joke!" And he laughed again.

He left the candy, nuts and oranges, and then filled the father's and mother's stockings.

He started to go. He came back.

"That is funny about the girl. I was sure Louie was a boy, but no, he must be a girl, and yet if he is a boy we must not disappoint him. I guess I better put this horn down in the toe of that stocking."

So old Santa slipped it in and then climbed up the chimney.

Morning came. The father and mother came quietly downstairs and went into the "Santa Claus room" to see that everything was all right.

When they opened the door Louie awakened and jumped up. He hardly remembered where he was until he saw the stockings full of toys. He pulled off his long dress and said to mother:

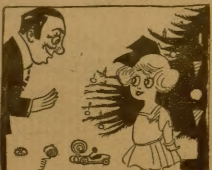
"Oh, it's just a joke I played on Santa," and they all laughed. But when Louie began taking the gifts from his stocking he stopped laughing. "Look here, father," he cried, "this stuff is all for girls! I never got a thing."

"Well, well, Louie, Santa must have gotten you mixed up with somebody else. That is funny, but see here." The father had discovered the long stocking, and then he understood and how he did laugh.

"I guess the joke was on you, Louie."

But Louie never saw it.

❧



Little Girl—"Santa Claus brought me a little baby sister Christmas."

Neighbor—"He did? That was fine!"

Little Girl—"Yes; an' it's th' only present me an' Freddie got that papa hasn't broken already windin' it up an' showin' us how it runs."

❧

NED'S CHRISTMAS TREE.

"I thought it was such an awful shame,"
My dear little laddie earnestly said,
"That Christmas day should be just the same
As a common day to old dog Ned.

"So I found some greens and made a tree—
I had to lean it against the wall;
But it was as pretty as it could be,
With three red candles and one glass ball.

"The presents did look a little queer,
For I hadn't a thing but bones and bread;
But I knew that they would be far more dear
Than sleds and skates to a dog like Ned.

"I saved up the bones for days, you know,
And I tied them on with ribbon knots;
And the bread was buttered—he liked it so,
And I had such a plenty—lots and lots.

"And Ned, old Ned, when he saw the tree,
Stood still a minute, then didn't he bound!
He was as surprised as he could be,
And barked and barked, and jumped all 'round.

"Then I gave him his presents, one by one,
Till there wasn't a bone left on the tree.
And now Ned's had Christmas, and lots of fun,
Just like the rest of the boys and me."

❧

THE CURE.

All the boys in the manual training class had made birdhouses. Each one had drawn his own plans and worked out his own design. Some had little porches or tiny bow windows and doors and these miniature homes of all colors and shapes were really fascinating.

They were finished and exhibited with other school work on the "last day." All the fathers and mothers and little brothers and sisters came to see them.

Among the admiring crowd was a little boy, Carol Gould, in his wheeled chair. His pale face was bright with interest as he examined the little houses, but there was a longing look in his eyes as he wished all to himself, that he might make a birdhouse, too. Perhaps he could next year, if his back grew stronger.

Little Jim Crow, with his black face shining with pleasure and with the soapy wash he had given himself for the occasion, stood near by, and all at once he seemed to have a new idea and exclaimed:

"Hello, Carol, would youse like to have a birdhouse? Here's mine if you'll take it and I'll go right up to your house and set it up, eh?"

"Oh, how grand! Would you really?" cried Carol.

"Sure! The people's all goin' now, and I reckon the teacher'll let me take it right along. You hold it in your lap and I'll wheel you."

Jim was a good business manager and soon had his plan under way and the boys were eagerly talking as they went along.

"You must let me pay you for it Jim," said Carol.

"Not much! We'll go partners. You furnish the lot and I'll furnish the house, and if the birds come we can watch them together."

"Oh, that will be fine! Will you come every day?"

"Sure, I'll be mighty glad to."

So the tiny red house was fastened on the tree right by the porch, and it was a fresh joy for Carol every morning to lie on his couch and watch the birds. Several of them in house-hunting flights came and looked at it. They would fly around it, sometimes fly into it, then perch on a near by branch and talk it over.

Carol was so interested he thought he could understand what they were saying about it. Sometimes the little mother bird would say:

"Robin, my dear, the house is too small for us and has not enough ventilation."

Another would say: "My dear Jenny Wren, the house is too exposed. Curious people will be looking at us."

One wise little father bird seemed to have real difficulty in persuading his little mate that it was not what they wanted. She persisted in flying in and out and lingered until finally he stamped his little foot on the roof, saying:

"No, no, no, come away!" Reluctantly looking over her shoulder, she flew with him to a high tree and then they went away.

Another little couple seemed quite satisfied and began to move in with straws and bits of lint when all at once they saw a squirrel near by, whereupon they both screamed and flew away in dismay.

This put an idea into Carol's head. He dearly loved the squirrels, especially his pet, Whisk, whom he fed every day. But he saw they might be a menace to the bird family life. What should he do? He and Jim consulted; the squirrels could go almost anywhere that a bird could and it was a question how to protect the house. Finally they moved the house on to a branch and suspended it with a strong wire. This was rather safer. The very next day a cunning pair of birds came along who were pleased with the location and without any discussion or quibbling began to move right in. With great interest Carol watched them in all their plans. He and Jim fixed a broad, shallow dish down in the grass under the tree which provided a drinking and bathing place for them. This was shared by many other birds who did not have bathrooms in their houses.

The boys watched most carefully that the squirrels should not disturb the little householders. One morning there was great crying and scolding, and Carol saw his pet squirrel creeping slyly on the roof of the birdhouse. He was frantic and called to the naughty intruder, but he paid no attention. He seemed to know Carol could not leave his chair. Then Carol seized his slipper and threw it, frightening the squirrel, who went scampering and chattering up the tree.

A few days later the peeping of the baby birds was heard, and then what busy times the father and mother bird did have to fill the hungry mouths, which were always open.

One day the doctor said to Carol:

"You are much better, my boy. What have you been doing?"

"I guess it's a birdhouse cure," laughed Carol. "You come down to our house and see what a family I have to look out for."

When the doctor came soon after and saw the pretty birdhouse and the little family and the bathing pool and heard about the squirrel scout he was much interested.

"I declare," he said, "I will get birdhouses for some other patients I have. Do you know where I can get them made?"

Jim, who was in the background, exclaimed:

"Y-a-as, 'ndeed, sir; I'll make 'em!"

"Good! I will take all you can make and pay you well for them. By the way, have Carol help you; he can work some now."

So it came about that the porch was made a workshop and the boys worked diligently at the new business of the birdhouse cure. And Carol is growing so strong now that he expects to make a house for the school exhibit next year. Pretty good!

❧

Bobby's run away to sea.
A pirate's what he wants to be.
He'll wear a cutlass on each flank
And make his prisoners walk the plank.

10 Pearls Absolutely FREE
START A FRIENDSHIP PEARL NECKLACE
Givers names on this Free Bond
Who would not like a Seagoda Pearl Necklace worth $10.00 given you by your friends and relatives, and the giver of each Pearl recorded by their name or initial on your Beautiful Bond of Friendship as a token of sentiment. We give you Ten Pearls, Friendship Record, and a Solid Gold Clasp FREE with every Necklace. Start to-day with one or more pearls at 12c. each, and FREE Pearls and Bond to start you will be sent with first 12c. order or more, your friends finish it for you, and you have a Pearl Necklace worth while. Order now and start with pearls we give FREE.
FRIENDSHIP PEARL CO., 83 Chambers St., Dept. 50, New York

Only $1.00 After Trial
Yes, you may keep this new Edison—and your choice of records too, for only a single dollar. Pay the balance at rate of only a few cents a day.
Free Trial Try the new Edison in your own home before you decide to buy. Have all the newest entertainments. Entertain your friends. We will send it to you without a penny down.
Write Today For Our New Edison Book Send your name and address for our new book and pictures of new Edison phonographs. No obligations.
F. K. BABSON, Edison Phonograph Distributors
C501 Edison Block, Chicago, Illinois

98 cents
5 YEAR GUARANTEE
Railroad Style
To advertise our business, we will send this elegant R. R. style watch by mail for ONLY 98 CENTS. Gentlemen's size, full nickel silver plated case, locomotive on dial, lever escapement, stem wind and stem set, a perfect timekeeper and fully guaranteed for 5 years. Send this advertisement to us with 98 CENTS and watch will be sent by mail post paid. Satisfaction guaranteed or money refunded. Send 98 cents today. Address
R. E. CHALMERS & CO., 538 So. Dearborn St., CHICAGO.

TO ANY WOMAN FOR GIVING AWAY 48 PACKAGES SOAP POWDER FREE
This beautiful fabricord leather, biscuit tufted, 22-steel spring parlor couch, over 6 ft. long by 2 ft. 3 in. wide for distributing (not sell) only 4 doz. pkgs. of our famous washing powder FREE among friends and neighbors, to introduce. No money or experience needed. NEW METHOD CO., 304 W. Superior St., CHICAGO

Driver Agents Wanted
5-Pass., 30 H.P. Electric Starting 114-in. W'lbase
Ride in a Bush Car. Pay for it out of your commissions on sales. I am daily shipping cars to Bush Agents. 103 went out last April. Big profits for you. Write at once for my 48-page catalog giving full details of 1917 model. Address J. H. BUSH, Pres., Dept. 1205
BUSH MOTOR COMPANY, Bush Temple, Chicago, Ill.

10 Cents a Day
Pays for This Cornet
An astounding offer! Only 10c a day buys this superb Triple Silver Plated Lyric Cornet. Free Trial before you decide to buy. Write for big offer.
WURLITZER
200 years of instrument making
Carrying Case Free with this superb triple silver plated Lyric Cornet.
Free Band Catalog Write for big 250-page Band Catalog. Rock-bottom, direct-from-manufacturers' prices on all kinds of instruments. Pay at rate of a few cents a day. Generous allowance for old instruments. Free trial. We supply the U. S. Government. Write today.
The Rudolph Wurlitzer Co., Dept. 5019
4th St., Cincinnati, O. S. Wabash Av., Chicago

ACORN UNI-LITE FREE
Turns night into day. 300 candle power. Carry as a lantern; weather proof. For anywhere as a lamp, garage, camp and around the house, farm. Write for big, free offer. Special opportunity to farmers, stockmen and motorists. Agents make big money. Write tonight for new 1916-1917 offer.
ACORN BRASS MFG. CO., 300 Uni-Lite Bldg., Chicago

Locket, Chain and Bracelet FREE Sell 6 boxes of Rosebud Salve at 25c box. Valuable preparation for burns, sores, pimples, piles, catarrh, corns, bunions, etc. Return the $1.50 and we will forward these 3 handsome gold plated premiums or choice from large catalog. Write for salve at once. WE TRUST YOU.
ROSEBUD PERFUME CO.
Box 100 Woodsboro, Md.

X-RAY KATHODOSCOPE. Latest pocket curiosity. Everybody wants it. See your best girl, and all she's doing. No one knows you see everything. Operates in all climates; lasts a lifetime. Always ready for use. 25c postpaid for this wonderful instrument.
KATHOS CO., 424 Park Row Bldg., N.Y. City

PFILE'S 65 VARIETIES farm-raised Land and Water-Fowls. Eggs in season. Incubators. Illus. Catalog and "Grower's Guide," 2c. An honest deal. Write today. HENRY PFILE, Farmer-Poultryman. Box 663 Freeport, Ill.

BOYS! You can make $5.00 a day selling the Master-Key. Sample free! Write today. Master-Key Pub. Co., St. Louis, Mo.